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TOM BOWLING

BY

CAPTAIN CHAMIER. R.N

SIXPENCE

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TOM BOWLING.

A Tale of the Sea.

BY

CAPT. FREDERICK CHAMIER, R.N.,

AUTHOR OF
'THE LIFE OF A SAILOR,' 'THE SPITFIRE,'
'JACK ADAMS,' ETC.

LONDON:
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BEDFORD STREET, STRAND.

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TOM BOWLING.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH IS A DESCRIPTION OF TOM BOWLING'S SUPPOSED BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EDUCATION.

'It's no use saying that a seamen shall only drink his allowance of grog. Ever since I was the size of a top maul I took to the liquor just as regularly as a horse to his evening's bucket of water, and the more my father tried to correct the disease, the more inveterately it grew upon me.'

'Why, Tom, your father was no sailor.'

'That's true; but he liked his glass for all that. I remember when he was very ill indeed, that he refused the assistance of one of the best doctors in the parish, merely because the man would not drink a drop with him; and he carried his prejudice so far, that for fear of offending him I was obliged to drink myself. Well, he got worse and worse, when luckily a kind of mafrodite man, something between a German doctor and an English mountebank, came to buy a dog—for, do you see, my father rather took a fancy to gentlemen's dogs, and was so kind that he fed and kept them for nothing when they came on a visit to him. "Well," said the German, "you are looking confounded ill, Mr. Hanson, and I should like to buy that Scotch terrier before you die."

'"Thank, you, sir," said my father. "Tom, hand the gemmen some of No. 1 out of the closet there. I'll part with the terrier for a trifle to you, but I don't think it would hunt safely near Enfield; do you understand. It's the finest creature after vermin of that kind as ever lived. Tom, you sponge, you gallon-measure, you hogs-head, take the bottle from your lips. Help the company first—then don't forget your father; you've no more religion than the Newfoundland puppy that came home last night. There, doctor, that's stuff as never saw a custom-house officer; it came from Deal in a squall of wind which lasted from the time it landed until it got here; there's no more water in that than in a dry ditch in summer; not enough for a frog to swallow, to keep life and soul together. I'm very ill, doctor, very; I wants your advice."

'"Why," said the doctor, "there's Mr. Volatily, who is so clever and benevolent a man."

'"I won't sell you the dog, not for its weight in gold, if you talk of that benevolent man again. What's the use of benevolence if a man won't drink a glass with a friend who is going out of the world; I'll take your physic, and you shall take your choice of my dogs—that's a bargain. Tom, give the doctor another glass; help him as you do yourself; and now I shall soon get well."

'"No, no, Mr. Hanson," said the doctor; "I'll buy your dogs, give you my best advice, drink a glass, or smoke a pipe with you; but I won't deceive you. The best of doctors could only prolong your sufferings, by keeping you a few weeks alive; but die you must, and that shortly; so take my advice, make your mind up to it, send for a clergyman, and endeavour to go to your grave with an easy conscience."

'"Tom, take the liquor away," cried my father; "the doctor's drunk as an owl."

'"Come, Mr. Hanson," said the doctor, "its no use putting the blinker over the eye of the question,"—for sometimes the German when he was a little angry forgot his Sunday's English. "I have bought dogs of you frequently, and you never sold me a bad one. I know all about your mode of life, and the tyfel—there is a tyfel—Mr. Hanson, will recollect the yelp of all your dogs, and remember you of their names by-and-by. Now a clergyman can settle all this for you. I can only patch up your body, but the black gentleman—I mean the clergyman—can patch up your mind, your conscience, and let you lie your head on your pillow comfortably and quietly. Take my physic in the morning, but see the clergyman at noon."

'"Well, sir," said my father, "you confound me—you bother me. How is the parson to rub off the names of my dogs from the books of the devil? I tell you, I never saw a parson but twice in my life, and that was rat-catching—and he spoke for all the world just like another man. Well, sir, I'm not afraid of him, and if he comes to-morrow, I'll see him, provided he'll drink a small drop with me."

'"Nonsense, man, nonsense," said the

German, interrupting him; "don't talk in that strain. In a few days you will be summoned from this world, and I tell you the time is very short between this and your coffin; and when once you are placed in that narrow house, it is too late for repentance. Your life has been one of crime, and the only favourable circumstance in it is the fact that your son Tom there has been brought up properly, and never was concerned in your various depredations."'

Here a loud shout of laughter from all the yarn listeners on the forecastle, at the good character Tom gave of himself resounded even to the quarter-deck. Tom blushed—he had a blush or two left; but he was cheered on by his shipmates calling upon him to tell the history of his early life; and the end of his father, whose exit was anything but satisfactory.

It was, however, the first time his shipmates ever knew that Tom Bowling, the favourite of the ship, the most daring 'devil-may-care fellow' of the whole crew, ever came from so very bad a stock as a dog-stealer of St. Giles's.

'Go on, Tom, my boy—don't blush so, said a fellow whose long tail and bushy whiskers gave the very beau ideal of a sailor some sixty years past—'what does it signify who your father was; if he had been better than you, why then I'm blessed if you would not have been like a potato, the best part of you underground; whereas now you're like the tall spars of a line-of-battle ship, seen first and last, above the hull that bore you, with a good character for carrying your canvas like a stout spar through every squall; so go on, and keep that blush for pretty Susan when we get into harbour.'

'Bravo Dick—well said, my lad, it's all true; Tom Bowling is just as fine a fellow as ever stepped between stem and stern of any craft between Iceland and Cape Horn.'

'Well, I'll tell you all about it, lads,' said Tom. 'The German doctor, who would have made a horse laugh from his mimicry of any man's face (he was about five-and-twenty, and often clapped his hat over his head and looked seventy), twisting his mouth as like my father as if it had been drawn by a painter, said: "Now, Mr. Hanson, just look at yourself, and see if you think you can last a fortnight." My father burst out a-laughing, told him to take the terrier, and to send his physic; and, as the German walked out of the room, he said: "I'll send you the physic and the clergyman; take in the first, but don't deceive the other. Good-bye, Mr. Hanson. Here, Tom, I want to speak to you. Don't you give your father any more brandy, and take less yourself. Get me the terrier, and I'll call to-morrow."

'My father never closed his eyes all that blessed night; he was rubbing up his memory, and making long speeches, all of which he intended for the parson. He hired a maid-servant to scrub the room; and although he had ever professed the greatest contempt for anyone of the black cloth, yet now, with death near at hand, and with the assurance that the reverend gentleman might assuage one or two most uncomfortable reminiscences——'

'Stop, Tom, a moment, what ships are those—"the *Assuageon* and the *Reminisent?*" I never heard of them in any fleet under Benbow, Vernon, Keppel, or Anson. Perhaps it's the *Dragon* and the *Rhinoceros* you mean?'

'Tom's a schoolard, Bill,' observed another; 'he's only larding his English with a bit of Spanish, or a touch of that German doctor's lingo; let him make sail, and we shall understand somehow or other on which tack the fleet were standing before the action with the parson began.'

'I beg your pardon, lads,' said Tom Bowling; 'I meant to say that the parson would take the rounding off the cable of his conscience, which was chafed by always riding out life in a constant gale of wind, and that he would be able to return it to the dock-yard above as good as when he first drew it from the store.'

'That's as right as a trivet,' cried Bill; 'that's a lingo every man can fathom; there's none of your dictionary words which would puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer, but real plain upright and downright, like a donkey's fore-leg—good intelligible English. Start a-head, Tom.'

'Well, lads, as I was a saying, when my father heard that the parson could do all this for him, he was determined not to let him work for nothing; so he ordered lots of good things, some fresh brandy, got the house clean, clapped on some new rigging, and put the skins of some of his dogs which had died before he could sell them as a kind of a mat for the parson to put his feet on. I was dressed up in a new suit, bought for the occasion, with a large shirt collar turned down like a charity boy at Sunday muster, with enough ribbon in my shoes to have made a tie for the tail of Benbow's bowman of the barge.

'The physic came first; that was swallowed after a few faces, and was washed down with a raw nip of brandy that would have startled the boatswain. I tried to stop his grog, according to the doctor's orders; but he let out a squall of words which frightened me; and when I told him that Mr. Volatily, the benevolent doctor, said he was coming to see him, he turned round as quiet as a child, and, says he "Tom, my boy, just go and let Pincher loose, and I'm mistaken if that benevolent doctor comes near me; just

clap Pincher on the staircase, and be alive, after he has bit the doctor, to tie him up again, or he'll eat the parson altogether. Go, Tom, that's a good boy; let the dog loose, and talk to him about physic."

'I thought the best way was to go to Mr. Volatily myself, and tell him who was standing sentinel over the hatchway. That was enough for him, although the good man tapped me on the shoulder, and, says he, "Tom, your father's just as great a brute as his dog, and he may die, for me."

'"Thank you," says I, "that's kind of you, to let a man die in peace; they say you are the most benevolent man in the parish, and I'm sure my father will think so too, although you never will take a drop of brandy with him. I'll tell him what you say, and I beg leave to thank you for him." So I took off my hat, made the benevolent apothecary a low bow, ran home, tied up Pincher, and delivered the message to my father, who was quite pleased at being allowed to die without interruption.

'It was about eleven o'clock that we heard a bit of a rumpus downstairs, and I looked over the railings to see what it was, when I saw a stranger ascending the hatchway as slowly as a purser in a hot day in the West Indies. He had got a black sack over him, and wore two pieces of white linen hanging from his neck, for all the world as if he had cut off the weekly account of a midshipman, and let them dangle from his neck; he hove to once or twice to take breath; for he never had been so far aloft before. I told my father what was coming upstairs, and, says he, "It's a parson, Tom; I hope none of the dogs is loose."

'Well, at last he got to the landing-place, and I never ran away, not an inch, although Mr. Monckton was there. I've often thought that was the most resolute moment of my life.'

'What, had you never seen a parson before, Tom?' asked one of the group.

'Never, that I know of.'

'"Does one Mr. Hanson live up here?" said the clergyman.

'"Yes, sir," said I, as I made a slant towards the door.

'"I wish he did not live quite so high up," said the visitor, "for it's hard work to march up so many steps. Is he dying?"

'"I thought he would have died," said I, "this morning; but since he's heard the doctor's not coming, I think he looks better."

'The parson looked at me, as much as to say, "You are a sweet nut for the devil to crack;" and after having got enough wind in him to serve for breath, he pushed me on one side, and came close up to my father's bed; he looked at him steadfastly for some time, and then recollecting himself, said, "Why, to be sure, you are the very man who stole my dog, and was tried for it!"

'"Ay, your reverence," said my father, "that's all true enough; and I'm heartily sorry for it, although it was my trade—and business must be attended to. Now, the German doctor says that I have not long to live; that he can only comfort my body—(Tom, you young blackguard, keep your beak out of that bottle,)—that boy, your Reverence, would drink a gallon of brandy before he had the civility to ask a stranger to take a glass. Well, sir, it's about my soul that I want to speak. The doctor said it was all in the spirit line, and that you were the best man in the world to see if it was proof, genuine, unadulterated, pure, neat; and so I took the liberty to ask for your company; and I hope you'll find the brandy good."

'The old gentleman, after listening attentively to the length of the yarn my father had spun, now began to talk a little.

'"You miserable man," he said, "at this awful moment, when the angel of life is holding you over the depths of eternal misery by a single hair, do you speak thus? Do you imagine that your long catalogue of crime, although it has been unseen by an earthly, will be overlooked by a heavenly Judge? An eye has watched you from your infancy—every action is recorded; and when in a few hours you stand before Him who knows every secret of your heart, how will you bear to hear your eternal condemnation?"

'"Tom," said my father, as he trembled all over, "tell Bob to take back the large Newfoundland dog, and bring the reward; and those other ones which lost their way in the dark, and came here for shelter, turn them out, with their heads in the right direction. Put your ear close, your reverence; I shall be easier when I have told you all about him there—he's not my child; I *found* him."

'"Whose child is he?" asked the parson.

'"I can't say, seeing as how I don't know; but he is a gentleman, as you can tell from his taking his liquor so cordially."

'I never remember to have seen my father overcome by any set of words before; the perspiration ran down his face in streams, and he breathed so heavily that I offered him some brandy.

'"No, Tom," he said; "no, no more of that for me; give it to his reverence; it will make him talk again, and I think he does me good."

'"Can you pray?" said the parson.

'"Yes, sir," replied my father, as meekly as a child.

'"What kind of prayer do you use—the Lord's prayer?"

'"No, your reverence; it's one I often used for dark nights."

'"There is no night of darkness, man, like your soul's; and I should ill perform my duty if I flattered you with pardon; even at the last moment before the last breath, the last sigh leaves the expiring man, some hope may

gladden the eye; but you offer no repentance for past crimes—your heart is seared in iniquity—there is no hand held in imploring prayer to Him who has said, 'Come unto me, all ye who are heavy laden;' but with brutal indifference, with a recklessness incomprehensible, you plunge headlong into that hell of darkness which is yawning to receive you; lift up those guilty hands, and let your sinful lips repeat these words." I watched Mr. Monckton, who knelt down by his side; an awful fear came over me, and I fell on my knees by the foot of the bed: my father's hands were held together, and in this attitude, whilst endeavouring to reach higher and higher as the words of the clergyman fell upon his ears, he gave one sudden convulsive shake, his arms fell by his side, his lower jaw opened, and he was dead!

'The clergyman saw it all, but he continued praying for him that was gone; and when he rose he pointed to the corpse and said, "Be this a useful lesson to you; and as you toil on through this dreary pilgrimage on earth, remember there is an eye which never slumbers, an ear which is ever attentive! And when, fatigued with life's journey, you lay down your staff, may Heaven grant your last hour be not like this—your only prayer cut short, your faltering voice stifled! Leave this abode when your duty to him you believed your father is done: seek a new life; become useful to your king and your country, and by your conduct obliterate the remembrance of his!" The gentleman then shook me by the hand, and saying, "May the seed of righteousness fall on fruitful ground," he slowly descended the stairs. I watched him; I cannot tell you the sensations I felt—a child might have felled me to the ground: my knees could scarcely support me, and at last I fell down at the head of the stairs.

'My father had money enough to procure a proper burial, and the clergyman who saw him die, read the last prayer over him. He beheld me crying over the grave, and when he finished he took me by the hand—for I had a decent set of rigging over my mast-head—and he led me to his house.

'"This is the lad, Anna," he remarked to his wife, "take care of him." I dare say I might have been happy had I remained with him all the days of my life—if I had worked for him like a slave, but it was ordained otherwise, and here I am. From the moment I was taken into the clergyman's house, I was put to school with some other lads younger than myself. The lady heard us our lessons three times a day; and although I attended in the house as a servant, I was always obliged to be at my station in school. Her daughter, a girl of my own age, first taught me my letters, and the first word I ever wrote was "Susan."

'When my father died I was only ten years of age. The clergyman sold the property, and I'm afraid to say how much my kind master told me was left to me—not as his son, but under the name of Thomas Bowling. He might have told me of guineas as plentiful as cowries in Africa, but I never saw one. I worked hard for my wages, which were regularly paid. I had clothes given me; and what made me a greater favourite was, the manner in which I went a-head in my books. I was never without them, and whenever I had a moment to spare I set to work to read or to write. Susan, the clergyman's daughter, called me her pupil; and at all the examinations at the school I used to see her eyes glisten as she said, when one lad could not answer the question, "Ask young Bowling, papa, he knows it well enough!"

'I remained at this work until I was twelve, during which time I had learnt to read and write properly—had been to church twice every Sunday, and knew the Prayer-book by heart. I was a stout looking lad of my age, and whenever Miss Susan wanted anything done she seemed to like to ask me to do it; for whenever she spoke, my ears were always wide open.

'There was no man more respected in the parish than the clergyman; but I fear he was not always so great a friend to himself as to his parishioners. He always gave away more than he ought to have given, because he had a wife and daughter to live after his death. He was very stout built, and somehow I always had an idea that a stout man makes a greater impression upon a society when he speaks, than a skeleton whose jaws you can hear rattle.

'It was one Sunday evening in July, the weather was as hot as at Port Royal in August, that the clergyman, after coming home from the service, looked very pale and ill. His wife saw it in a moment, and the daughter soon caught the alarm. It was as much as my master could do to reach his chair before he fell into a fit. I ran directly for the German doctor, who was then a man of great practice, and he drove to the house directly. The other servant in the house had gone for Volatily, and they both arrived at the same moment. One began to cut away at my poor master's head, to open the artery, whilst the other set to work at both arms. Never did I see more courage in a man than was shown by the wife and Susan. It's an ugly sight is blood, when flowing down a face we have often loved, revered, and caressed! But they witnessed the sight without flinching; there was a determination to do their duty, which seemed to have dried their eyes—for women oftentimes cry and work, and as they cry work the harder. But here was nothing of the sort; it was all a kind of fevered despair, without a beam of hope—and they had learnt their duty from him who now received at their hands the benefit of his own Christian instruction.

'A blister was ordered to be put on the nape of the neck, and Volatily prepared and cut it—but the clergyman's wife put it on. She patted it down more tenderly I thought than the apothecary would have done; and wherever the pain was most likely to be intense, there was the small hand of Susan to assuage it.

'The German doctor was a man of great feeling. To the hurried questions which were asked with scarcely intermission, he answered as softly as a girl. He gave hope, without inspiring a perfect confidence; and to the imploring eye of the daughter he had a soothing response. I was by the bedside, and I watched there for five hours; the good old man never spoke but in a whisper, first to his wife, and then a long time to his daughter. During that time Susan was on her knees in fervent prayer. Yes; and I knelt by the deathbed of him who perhaps had saved me from a life as disreputable as my reputed father's. It was then I remembered the words of the clergyman when my father died, and I thought of the difference of the scene here. In the midst of his family, surrounded by those who loved him, warm from the church where he had offered up his prayers—his sickness occasioned by the exertion used to call others to repentance—the good man received the benedictions of all who surrounded his bed, and lay in silent calmness awaiting the last command.

'It was not until long after the first shock that either wife or daughter shed a tear; but when they burst out, they wept for hours. But there was no complaining; they seemed wonderfully supported. No thought occurred of the future privations they were destined to experience; every thought was for him; every action to assuage his pain. It was about eleven the next morning that the old gentleman spoke, and gave us hopes of his recovery. He seemed, however, to be aware that death was lingering in the room, and he sent for an attorney to arrange some few matters. They mostly concerned me; for all his worldly wealth would die with him, and his furniture be the fortune of his wife. I heard my name mentioned often.

'The attorney being gone, the wife and daughter read prayers to him, during which he fell off again. The doctor had from the first but little hope; and now it was evident he had still less. He prepared the family for the blow so near at hand, and with great feeling declared his incompetency to ward it off. He urged them to place their hope in a higher power, and resign themselves to the calamity, according to the lesson ever inculcated, with Christian resignation. So indeed they did. They watched with all affection; there was no moment when the eye was withdrawn from the patient; and his last breath was exhaled between the wife and the daughter. At his funeral a long train of sincere friends attended him to his grave, and his loss was severely felt and regretted.

'It appeared that I was now to be under the direction of the German doctor, who gave me to understand that I was shortly to be removed to school. It was another trial of strength. I had to part with those who had taught me all I knew: who had rescued me from a life of shame; and who had fed and clothed me. I was resolved not to make my first farewell my last, and therefore I said "Goodbye" to Susan, who looked lovelier than ever in her mourning, and I took up my abode at the doctor's. Here I found myself treated more as a gentleman; for during the three days I was in the house I dined every day with my guardian. The fourth day I was packed off to school; but I had been told by the doctor that whenever I should come to the age of one-and-twenty, I should be able to live like a lord, and drive a one-horse shay. Amongst other matters, he told me of the distress which the widow and the daughter would experience; and being a man of the world, and having I suppose known that when people become poor they are very much pitied and left to starve, he ventured to say that without Susan got a place, and the widow worked like a pedlar's donkey, one would soon be ruined, and the other buried.

'I have no doubt it was my thinking of the wretchedness of their situation that procured me no less than four floggings the first week I was at school, and I dare say I should have got four more the next week if I had not taken the liberty of burning my master's rods, and of walking off with myself. I was the companion of another boy, who was of my own age, and who had bothered his father to send him to sea, wishing to carve out his own misery, in direct defiance of his father, who was going to send him to India to make a large fortune in a few years, and enable him to come home with a liver complaint and a yellow face.

'We *never* know what is best for ourselves in this world—never; I remember a magistrate at Portsmouth saying as much to a man who was brought before him for stealing poultry. "I think the best thing I can do," said the culprit, "is to go home to my mother and live a better life." "Depend upon it," said the magistrate, "you are quite wrong; the best place for you is the gaol. Take him away for three months." My first visit after I had ventured to draw breath and look behind me was to the widow and to Susan. A change had taken place in the house, for there was no servant, half the furniture seemed gone, and I knew enough of what had been to know the truth of the doctor's observation: they had the rent to pay, without the means, but by the sale of their goods; and their hands never having been accustomed to work, they felt the ad-

vances of poverty without the power of warding it off. I had only two shillings in my pocket.'

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE TRUTH OF THE PERSIAN REMARK, THAT 'A BLACK BOY MAY RETURN WITH A WHITE FACE.'

'I DID not dare go back to the doctor's, and I had to find out a mode of getting my bread; that was all arranged in my mind. I was mad to go to sea, and I knew half a score of songs quite historical enough to prove that sailors were the happiest men in the world; made money as surely as their enemies had ships; were always in love; and passed their lives with a grog-bottle by their side, and a song on their lips. So my mind was made up: on that evening I would sleep on board a vessel in the river, and trust to the generosity of the crew to give me something to eat.

'Susan was very kind to me. She hoped the good lesson inculcated by her father and herself would never be lost upon me; she told me that now she had to practise that patience and resignation which she had ever taught, to comfort her poor mother in her affliction, and to work for her support. But in this trying circumstance she would cheerfully do her duty; that the hour of toil was the happiest, since it prevented her thinking of times past, and she knew the termination of her work would be the means of providing her poor mother with food. I looked at her—that is, I tried to see her, but my eyes swam in tears. She saw it; she bade me not fear for her, but in my future life to remember that my prosperity would be welcome intelligence to her; and that any proof of honourable conduct would be the most acceptable news which could reach her. She thought of me, not of herself; and when I told her that, whichever way the wind might set, the remembrance of her would ride on the breeze, she shook me by the hand, and went to another room. I put the two shillings on the table and left a scrap of paper on which I said I wished it had been two hundred pounds; that I was gone to sea; and that they might pay me when I came back.

'I walked out of that room the happiest boy in England, without a rap in the world, without a friend, for my schoolfellow had been picked up by a relation, whilst waiting for me; and with a heart as light as a feather, and a stomach very clamorous, I steered a course to Tower Hill, and by four o'clock in the afternoon was a cabin-boy on board of a collier, under the name of Tom Bowling—had washed the captain's tumbler wiped his plate, and given him his long-shore-going-coat, after which I got something to eat, and I slept like a top.

'There, my lads; there is a yarn long enough for any man to spin in one night.'

'Not a bit of it, Tom. Why, you have not told us anything; let's hear how you came on board a man-of-war—what became of Susan, bless her little heart!—and how she lived. Why, my lad, you tip us a stave about your learning and your dogs, but you leave out the women and the love; we have half an hour more, and a boy's adventure, as you call it, always does my heart good to hear, particularly when the wind has set dead in his teeth, and he has been able to work to windward of every rock and shoal, and come safely to anchor, without having scraped off his character in the shallows.'

'There are many of us, I dare say,' resumed Tom, 'who began life in a collier, with a face as black as a hat, and with heart as sick as such a life could cause. They were clearing the cargo when I entered; and young as I was, and comparatively weak, I was not allowed to be idle. I believe I did all the work of the vessel myself, and although I might be called a cabin, yet I hailed for the "ship's-boy;" but when the vessel was cleared and washed, and we had all changed our faces and become white, the crew became discontented because they had nothing to do; whilst they worked they were happy, when they were idle they became miserable; and, my lads, I think we all know this to be a fact, that whenever a man becomes idle he gets into mischief. I was never idle; a cabin-boy in a collier has never time enough to wash his own hands without he does it when he cleans the tea-things; but although I was employed, I was not happy. I kept thinking of Susan, and every now and then made up my mind to take French leave and visit her; but then I thought that she would pay the two shillings, and that would distress her and myself also, so somehow or other I made up my mind to be contented in my situation, and clapping on a smile of contentment, worked away like a galley-slave.

'We sailed with a poor crew enough; we were "the *Empty Bottle*," a light collier, bound to the northward, and being light, we pitched about at every sea. I got over sea-sickness better than many others, for after the first four hours I was kicked and thrashed until I forgot it, and it left me for ever. We were not two days from the river before we were boarded by a cutter, and the crew mustered. We had exactly our number; but the officer declared one or so less would be no inconvenience. He asked us if we would volunteer for the navy; and although each man looked as if it was an offer to go into the worst slavery, which he hardly dared refuse, lest he should be

pressed, they all muttered out a most decided "no," and the officer continued his offer.

'"Why, you young handsome fellow," he began, as he addressed me, "are you going to spend your best days with a black face in a collier, when you might be a vice-admiral of the red in twenty years?"

'I looked at him with great delight; it was the first word of encouragement I had received.

'"Won't you volunteer for the king's service, my lad?" he continued; "that's the place where merit is always rewarded, and where the young and the active get into notice and promotion. Why, I should be ashamed, if I were you, to spend my life in going for coals and taking them back again; washing up tea-cups, and cleaning other people's shoes; doing nothing for yourself, and being kicked for your neighbours. Go on board a man-of-war; be a sailor in reality; make prize-money; laugh and sing; drink grog, and christen the cat."

'I said I should have no objection.

'"Objection!" said he, with a stare as long as if I had asked him for some money or spoken Greek to him; "objection! why, if you knew what I offered you, the fortune which I am putting within your grasp, the pleasure I am proffering, you would fall down on your knees and thank me with tears in your eyes."

'"Oh Lord!" said one of the men near me; "that man would talk a schoolboy out of his bread and butter."

'"Go look at yourself in a glass, my lad," continued this crimp; "see what a gallant fellow you would be in a pair of epaulettes; fancy yourself an admiral, commanding a fleet, surrounded by your officers, the flag of your enemy just lowered, his sword placed in your hand, your crew cheering their brave commander, and then look at this dirty collier, and say, 'If I slaved on for forty years, I could not expect to command even this.'"

'"I'll enter," said I.

'"That's enough, my lad; put this shilling in your pocket, hand up your chest and bag, and there's the boat."

'"Ah," said the captain of the collier; "he won't sink the boat with the baggage. A precious fool you are, Bowling! An admiral! my eyes and limbs, but you'll be without your shirt, lashed to the gratings, long before ever you walk on even the lee-side of the quarter-deck: it's all too late now; you have taken the bounty. There's the boat, and there's another shilling for you, which you may return me with five per cent. interest when you are an admiral. Stupid boy, to be gulled by a parcel of words."

'When I was ready, I went to shake hands with my shipmates. "Good bye, admiral," said one. "Hope your honour won't forget an old shipmate," said another. "Admiral Bowling, your barge is alongside," said a third, and all hands burst out a-laughing; but when they saw that I was crying, being quite unable to comprehend their banter, they shook my hand and comforted me. So it was, my lads, that three days after I left the Thames in a collier, I was a volunteer in the service on board the cutter, which, having made a considerable haul from other vessels, was now standing towards the Medway to discharge her cargo at Chatham.'

A youngster is like wet clay—you may mould him anyways. Some take the cast of rather an ugly shape, and never turn out well in life; others catch better forms and images, and become great men; whilst by far the greater number rush into neither extreme, but go down the great river of life, swept unobserved by its current, and, lost in the great ocean of eternity without a name, are obliterated entirely from memory. Out of the eight hundred millions of people who inhabit the earth, for a period of twenty years, about ten will be remembered in the page of history as great or striking characters. The middling lords are quite unnoticed; and only four or five hundred persons famous for crimes, daring villainies, or mischievous legislation, make for themselves a notoriety and a name. Such is existence, and such is the end of fame.

Every one first emerging into life has hope for his lighthouse, and ambition for his pilot. How few round the point where hidden shoals and sunken rocks occasion the whirlpool of destruction! Even when safe from the fury of the storm, and past the boiling surf of dangers, they are assailed by the ever-ready wind of detraction, or the poisoned breeze of slander, leaving it to the last a doubt, whether the middle course is not the best, as above detraction, and beneath envy; but who would, when young, rob his heart of its best wishes, of its ambition? and yet, when the attained, where is the happiness?

'I very soon found,' continued Bowling; 'that it was not all gold that glittered. I certainly was not placed in any condition on board the cutter likely to make me think that my promotion to an admiral was the natural consequence of my entering the service; and however much I might have been kicked and cuffed on board the collier, it was mere child's play to that which followed on board my new vessel. I was merely a boy, but I was every one's boy, and it is better to serve under one despotic master than under a dozen slaves who believe themselves free. Everybody conceived I was his slave; and it was in vain I remarked that I had volunteered for the service of the king—not for the service of his seamen; but I had much better have kept my remarks to myself, as they only procured me more kicks and cuffs.

'"Never mind, youngster," said one of the old birds employed to decoy the young ones; "take it easy, grin, and bear it; you can't strike the hoop of a cask without

bruising your knuckles, or stumble over a scraper without hurting your ankles. In a week you will be as hard as a two-and-thirty pound shot, and you won't feel when any one hits you. Patience, my lad; patience and perseverance; a marling-spike and a fid of grease, and you'd get your little finger into the touch-hole of a gun; so patience and perseverance, as the parson says, and you'll soon push your way as well as the best."

'I fancy that old fellow's voice now, croaking in my ear, and saying, "Take an old seaman's advice, and remember it whenever you feel down-hearted: the longest day will have an end, and though it's cloudy in the morning, the sun may shine bright enough at noon for the master to take an observation!" It's owing to always thinking of this fellow's advice that I have steered clear of the gangway, and never had an angry word from my officers. And many's the time that the darkest cloud has cleared away, and left a smile on the captain's face. There, my lads, I'm off to my hammock. To-morrow morning, and I shall be in the cutter going for fresh beef. The wind is fair, the Ram Head is in sight, and Plymouth Sound will see us at daylight!'

Tom Bowling was even then 'the darling of the crew;' for he was ever ready to do a kindness. He was a brave, generous, open-hearted lad, and, like all youngsters in the navy, he was in love, and with his Susan. Something tempted him to write to her, for he had never seen her since he left the money on the table. But then he thought how useless it would be, since he had no idea of her residence; and although she had said how happy she should be to receive a letter, yet, boy-like, he feared to write it. He was now eighteen years of age, a well-made, handsome, young man. He had ever amused his leisure hours by reading, and unlike his shipmates, who generally availed themselves of all idle moments to sleep, he devoted that time to continuing the education which Susan had begun. Every one of Tom Bowling's songs, and he had written a score of them, had Susan for the heroine; they all, too, breathed a certain love. He thought in all gallant actions the pleasure was enhanced by the approbation of women. Such were English seamen; they were ever ready to fall in love, and although a great stress had been laid upon their inconstancy, this is a point upon which most men familiar with these amphibious mortals may be excused if they differ. Across the Atlantic it is a long way for a lover to send a sigh, and Jack only, I fear, remembered his love when the ship was ordered home; then he was liberal of his purse and praise, and the money he had gained at the peril of his life was flittered away in useless gaudy presents, to dress out the miserable object of his temporary affection. Duty, constant employment, and a vigilant first lieutenant, are awful odds against that sincere love which requires time to bring to maturity.

Of all professions in the world, there is none comparable with that of a sailor. Compare him with the labourer of the soil. See how frequently a large family and small income help to drive the most industrious man to the poor-house. He is indeed a 'day labourer,' for he must rise with the sun, sometimes even before, and only for a few weeks in summer after it; from that moment until darkness comes on, or in summer until seven in the evening, must he drudge and delve at the most irksome, the most monotonous employment, where there is no variation of view to give him a momentary pleasure—no sudden change to enliven his miserable existence. It is a round of eternal labour, at a price barely sufficient for his support, and not nearly sufficient for his comfort. The day's work over, he is glad enough to creep to his bed, and find in his heavy slumbers some dream of happiness never to be realized.

Would you compare the sailor with the mechanic—there again is the same monotony—the same fixture of residence. If it be his lot to swing the ponderous hammer, which rings against the anvil—or the saw, or the plane; or if attached to any manufactory—there, in that one place, must he linger out his life, unless, indeed, as many have done, he breaks all connection with his own country, and emigrates to a new land, there to go back from the little civilization he ever knew, to herd with savages, or outcasts.

The soldier, again, paraded at dawn, standing on one leg like a goose, until at a given signal he puts it down only to lift the other—then the heavy musket, the weighty accoutrements, the toilsome march, the covering one dirt with another dirt—pipe-clay, a clean soldier is always a dirty man—then for the forced marches, the array of battle, the long, long hours of anxiety, the charge, the wound, and then left on the ground for some malicious enemy to wound more deeply, or to kill—then comes the stiffened wound, the jolt in the cart to be carried in the rear, the hours necessarily lost before he can be attended to, the nights passed on the cold, damp ground, the difficulty attending the regular service of his provision, and the constant burden strung upon his shoulders, and almost bearing down his exhausted frame from its unnecessary weight.

Give me the life of a sailor; he roams the world—the ship his home—he carries with him his apartments ready furnished—to him the treasures of the new world are shown—every climate, every soil, every people, become familiar to him—his nights are nights of repose, and in the hour of danger he has assistance ever at hand—if wounded in defence of his country his bed is ready to re-

ceive him, and in comparative security the surgeon dresses his wounds. The storms, the thunder and the lightning, the raging winds or towering seas, are disregarded by him who ever associates with them; he is cradled upon the ocean, and with the security of a child in its first bed, calmly reposes in the midst of the storm. He forms one of a small community, each bound to protect and foster the other; he sees in the flag under which he serves the honour of his cause, and his greatest pride is to maintain it uninjured. With a light heart and cheerful countenance he does his duty to his king; he has few wants beyond his grog, and his song is ever of that and the girl of his heart. His money has no miser's care, he shares it with his shipmate in open-handed liberality; and if the evening of his life seems lowering from his youthful prodigality, there rises on the distant horizon of his age the stately towers of Greenwich Hospital, his hope, his refuge, his reward.

Such is a sailor's life. It is strange that one never sees a melancholy seaman; it is unnatural, and as much in contradiction to his character as top-boots are to his dress.

These men have been, and still must be, England's main-stay. And it is the duty of those who have commanded in the battle and the breeze to keep them in the remembrance of those whose riches they have protected, and whose bulwark they remain.

It was in the month of May, many years ago, that Tom Bowling anchored in Plymouth Sound. He was rated an able seaman, from his intrepidity during a gale of wind; and in spite of the three hundred men not one of whom had risen to be an admiral, Tom had a few Spanish towers floating in his imagination. Whenever he looked aft, and saw the officers in their Sunday uniforms, he could not help fancying that one day he should rise to their rank, and one day be respected as they were. The foremast man has seldom this idea—this gleam of hope; but Bowling was an educated seaman—he saw no barrier which good behaviour and steadiness could not overleap, and he kept his eye abaft at the object to be attained.

In the meantime a change had come over the life of Susan. As long as her father lived, she never was destined to service; as a clergyman's daughter she had always been respected; there was a kind of halo which encircled the rector's home and family; but this airy nothing soon dissipated when death deprived the mother and daughter of their protector. For a month or two they struggled on; but debts began to rise up in various quarters — their contracted circumstances soon forced them to retire from the little society they ever knew; and their pride—clergymen's wives and daughters have as much pride as their neighbours—forbade them to solicit assistance.

At first Susan felt alarmed at proposing to take in work, or to become a governess. She preferred the first to the last; for she would then still be independent, and whenever a *friend* did call—friends are very rare visitors when the tide of misfortune sets in—she could still appear as a lady, and maintain a certain dignity; but under all inflictions, all unkindness—for now and then an expression dropped which the sensitive heard—she rose superior to sudden outbreaks of temper, and in the calm solitude of her own chamber received the support of religion.

How different was the fervent appeal to Providence for assistance in Susan to the self-sufficient rant of those visionary enthusiasts who know themselves *called*, and who unhesitatingly denounce their neighbours; who boldly tell us, with unblushing faces, that they feel themselves safe, and are sure of a happy eternity when the weariness of life's pilgrimage is over; who bravely declare that every action of their lives was predestined, and that they, being predestined, and being aware of it, must be saved. Their prayers are the desire of the arrogant, rather than the supplication of the lowly-minded and the penitent.

At last poverty began to stare both the mother and daughter in the face; there were very few articles left for sale, the produce of which might yield a scanty sustenance for a month; then indeed the case would be desperate, and a public appeal requisite. Susan's resolution was soon taken. It was useless waiting until the storm burst, when by activity she might avoid it, or so far have sought shelter as to be secure against its ravages. She applied to one who still deserved the name of friend: interest was made in a quarter where few ever applied and were unceremoniously dismissed. Susan was eagerly engaged, her meek, modest manner being her best recommendation. Her mother was removed to a neat cottage not far from Portsmouth; and, before the last article had been sold, Susan was duly installed as governess in the family of Mrs. Talbot.

CHAPTER III.

IN WHICH TOM PEPPER, WHO WAS TURNED OUT OF THE SAME PLACE THAT ORPHEUS WENT TO FOR HIS WIFE, IS OUTDONE.

THERE are very few situations in life more painful than that of a governess. In some families where their merits are properly estimated, they are companions as well as instructors; with the haughty, the proud, the poor grown suddenly rich, they are little better than upper servants. Admitted into

the drawing-room of an evening, studiously avoided, as 'only the governess,' and slighted by the frivolous, who, wrapped in ignorance, bring wealth to cover the poverty of their minds. Poor Susan had heard from her father how often the poor are despised, or insulted by wordy pity. She approached her future residence with fear and trembling; and imagined she saw, even in the servant who handed her trunk from the coach, his duty done as a favour. But all her misgivings were speedily dissipated; she was met by her future pupil with a smile of early friendship, and the mother received her as a companion.

There was in the expression of Rosa Talbot's face some indication of sickness, which might have escaped the unpractical eye of Susan. She was about fifteen years of age, her eyes bright, her complexion very clear, but pale; there was occasionally a slight flush suffused the face, of the most brilliant colour, whilst the figure was very slim and delicate. She was not either handsome or pretty; but there was a meekness, a mildness so truly feminine, that no one could have observed without being interested. She was a sad contrast, in some respects, to her governess, who was plump and redolent of health; her dark hair and dark eyes were beautiful, and every feature seemed stamped in nature's loveliest mould. She was much too handsome for her situation. She would have attracted more notice than her pupil, who, in her turn, would have excited the most interest.

Susan found her pupil awfully deficient. The fact was, that, with the best talent, her health had been the barrier to accomplishments. She was so weak and fragile, that any exertion overcame her; and she was obliged to be humoured more than commanded. The governess had been selected, whilst cultivating the closest intimacy, to make her conversation the vehicle of knowledge, and to instil into Rosa's mind, without the fatigue of application, the rudiments of science and of religion; a better selection could not have been made. Susan was weak, mild, and affable; and having long practised upon the thick skulls and shallow brains of her charity-school, found this mode of enlightening her companion much more easy and agreeable than the everlasting drudgery of a school-room.

A few months only had elapsed before Susan was so much the friend of Rosa, that each unburthened her mind to the other without reserve. Susan's early history was soon told; nor was Bowling's name omitted in the recital. In this the attentive pupil, whose ears greedily received the moral so well conveyed, was taught that, in all circumstances of life, those who bear up cheerfully against misfortunes, and who acknowledge these misfortunes as the dispensations of a just Providence, show that the seeds of religion have not fallen on a barren soil; that while the wicked repine at any trivial mischance, grow morose and disheartened in any affliction, the truly great, and the well-grounded in religion, bow submissively to the storm they cannot control, and bear a cheerful and contented heart in the midst of tribulation and adversities.

It was evident to Susan that her companion would never outlive the age of nineteen. She had already outgrown her strength; and the medical attendant had thought it his duty to warn the parent of his greatest apprehension. In vain were those beautiful ringlets brought further forward to cover the thinness of that pallid cheek; within that attenuated form the havoc still continued, consumption was sapping life; and yet unfelt by its victim, it neither gave the warnings which accompany less certain death, nor produced the inconveniences of every ordinary indisposition. On the contrary, Rosa often talked of future prospects in life, of the certainty that one day she should be united in marriage with the only man she ever respected, ever loved; she was now eighteen, and Susan well knew the secret of her heart.

Near the residence of Rosa's mother, which was in Devonshire, resided a rich cousin; here she had been sent by the careful physician, who was far too liberal to keep his patient in London for the sake of his fees, when he saw that by removing her to a milder climate she might perhaps survive some few months, or years. Cousins are at all times dangerous gentlemen; they come at once half-way up the ladder of love; they are privileged to call the lady by her Christian name; they extend the hand as a right; and not unfrequently a caress may be given without any very particular breach of good manners being committed. The cousin may walk alone with his cousin, and may find hundreds of opportunities of whispering what it would not be prudent to mention aloud. On the other hand, the suitor not having the advantage of relationship, must make good his approach; he must read a partial approval before he ventures upon the slightest intimacy; and can scarcely hope for one minute's conversation without some other person overhearing it.

Love, they say, is blind: it may be so; we know that love is not always mutual.

Captain Cornish, of a marching regiment, was one of those young gentlemen by no means unfrequently seen in country places. He was of good family, of good expectations, a good shot, and by no means a bad hand at fishing. He was tall, well-made, handsome; but was not troubled with more sense or principle than he could conveniently carry. He had spent some seasons in London; but in spite of his having mixed in all kinds of societies, he was bashful and reserved before women. He possessed one

accomplishment in a greater degree than his companions—he could draw the long-bow with persevering steadiness; and he was blessed with a respectable memory, which enabled him to remember his assertions, and had just readiness enough to support them by other falsehoods.

'Ah, Rosa, my dear!' said the welcome cousin, 'how fares it with you to-day? and yet I need not ask the question, for I never saw you more redolent of health. What a beautiful tinge you have on those lovely cheeks; and how animated are those brilliant eyes! Can you walk to-day?'

'I fear not, Augustus; I cannot move without feeling a shortness of breath; and even your entrance, which I had long expected, has made my heart palpitate more than running a race could have done.'

'Poor Rosa, I'm sorry I disappointed you; I was obliged to attend my father, who required me to read the news to him, for his sight gets gradually worse. And I confess, although you were my heart's object, that I felt an inexpressible pleasure in doing my duty.'

Captain Augustus Cæsar Cornish had been busily employed, from breakfast until a few minutes before he visited his cousin, in playing billiards with a younger brother, who was just as idle and just as frivolous as himself.

'I forgive you, Augustus,' said Rosa; 'for your duty is, I know, a pleasure to you. How gratified my uncle must be in noticing the cheerfulness in which you devote your time to his wishes. Sit down, and tell me the news. We invalids are ever clamorous for that, although I hope next season to hear it in London from those who do not require to be asked for it.'

'Charming Rosa! always playful, always agreeable. The news;—ah, let me see! My memory is so treacherous. The news! —there is nothing particular to-day, excepting the mention of a turnip so large that two boys ate their way into it, and remained concealed from the search of the schoolmaster for three days, subsisting entirely therein and thereupon.'

'Oh, then,' replied Rosa, 'Miss Monckton must have been dreaming, for she mentions that half London is in agitation on account of the news from America. And scarcely any event has given rise to such popular emotion as the battle which is made public —the Battle of Bunker's Hill.'

'Really!' replied Cornish, 'why I thought it given on so slender a foundation that I discredited it entirely, and am perfectly sure that it will be contradicted to-morrow.'

'That can hardly be, Augustus, for Miss Monckton read it from the *Gazette*, and remarked the names of some of the officers officially returned as killed and wounded.'

'Oh, the *Gazette!* I must have overlooked that in reading the accounts of partnerships dissolved and bankrupts, both of which are very interesting to my father and myself. Where is Miss Monckton?'

'She is taking her morning's walk. What a delightful companion she is.'

'A kind of semi-demi-instructress — an ambulating distributer of science; one, my dear Rosa I would not call a governess, and who is too plain to be your companion and friend.'

'Now, Augustus, I verily believe you have lost your sight. You could not see plainness in Susan, whose loveliness is evident to every beholder, without being so blind as to need spectacles. I hardly ever saw her equal; and if she were dressed as becomes her rank in life,—for she is the daughter of a clergyman,—she would be more admired than any Devonshire lady at the county ball.'

'Not if my cousin Rosa was present.'

'Pooh! pooh! Augustus. This wretched bag of bones, these sunken, hollow cheeks, these attenuated arms, could but ill contrast with the plump figure, the healthy hue, the well-rounded shoulders of Susan.'

'I like delicate women; I cannot endure your vulgarly healthy people, who walk six miles before breakfast, and come home covered with dust, and laden with a handful of hedge-flowers. They are too masculine. Give me the soft mildness, the elegant lassitude of my Rosa. Her bright eyes and beautifully tinged cheeks have more charms for me than the hoyden impetuosity, the milk-maid rosiness, of unfashionable health.'

Here Captain Augustus looked most unutterable sweetness, and pressed her hand. Mr. Cochrane says,

> 'The shake of the hand speaks a language much clearer,
> Than any which words would essay to express.'

And Rosa Talbot, as she gently returned the squeeze, said she hoped before next spring to be at any rate in a little better health, and to have left some of her unfashionable appetite in Devonshire.

'Whatever opinion you may have formed of Susan,' she continued, 'do, my dear Augustus, remember she is my friend and companion; and that I should esteem her the more for her praise of your civility to her. She is gone to the churchyard, to attend the burial of poor Hodge's boy, and I sent by her a trifling sum, to which she added more than she could well afford to the afflicted parents. Is it not odd, Augustus, that the wealthy require words of consolation for themselves, but think money will heal the afflicted mind in the poor?'

'For the matter of that, Rosa, upon my soul I have the greatest esteem for those who heighten consolation by cash. I would be as melancholy and as gloomy as those spirits described by Vathek, and carry my hand over my heart for a month, if my father would

remember it in the weekly bills, and console me by a few words written in his banker's cheque. Good-bye, darling; I shall come again to-morrow.'

'Do not disappoint me, Augustus; before Susan came you were here constantly, and now you think I have a companion, you make me own my greater affection for you, by requesting your return.'

'My dear little creature,' said Augustus, as he took his cousin's privilege, and kissed the wan cheek of the girl he was deceiving, 'do not doubt me; you are ever nearest my heart. I have no wish but to be for ever in your presence.'

Poor Rosa burst into a flood of tears. It was an indirect offer, at least the herald of a future declaration, and hers were tears of joy. The captain saw them, and he left her to the full enjoyment of the pleasure to be derived from them.

No sooner was Captain Augustus Cæsar Cornish clear of the premises, than he stretched his long legs and made good strides towards the church; and as he turned up the lane which led to its porch, he saw coming towards him the beautiful figure of Susan Monckton. A flush suffused his countenance, which the presence of Rosa never occasioned. He felt his heart beat quicker, and involuntarily he quickened his pace. There was a light breeze which gently agitated the thin drapery, and Susan's figure was seen in spite of her dress, and such a figure as poets have described as the perfection of the female form. Captain Cornish had long admired her beauty, and he was fearful that his cousin might perceive it. Women's eyes are very quick when the object of their admiration is near, and thus he contrived his visits so as to be alone with his cousin, and likewise most accidentally alone with Susan.

'I come, Miss Monckton,' he began, 'to aid you in your charity. My cousin, poor dear sick girl, told me of your benevolence, and, with your permission, I hasten to contribute the means which may enable you to be more liberal to the afflicted parents. Charity would be more appreciated were such good angels more numerous.' Captain Cornish was up to a compliment or two; he had studied the art of love from every author of any repute, and he had also imbibed the vulgar but correct notion of 'put it on thick, and a little will stick,' so that in plaster and in compliments the proverb is verified.

Miss Monckton was in no way displeased. There was a slight confusion, the very timidity of love in the gallant captain, and she received the purse with an assurance that it should be bestowed in forwarding his wishes.

'My cousin, I fear, is very ill,' he continued; 'each day appears to me to render her weaker and weaker.'

'She does, certainly,' answered Susan, 'appear to grow worse, and yet every now and then there is a flush of such health, such a brilliancy of the eye when she speaks of her next season in London, that I almost imagine her prepared for the dance. I think I never knew anyone more resigned in her sickness. She now finds sufficient amusement in books, and has never a melancholy, because she has never an idle moment.'

'Who could be melancholy in your presence, Miss Monckton? People dream not of gloom in the splendour of a bright sunshine, and with one of your animated spirits, your lively conversation, your readiness at reply, my cousin must ever be cheered and amused.'

'It is a pity,' said Miss Monckton, endeavouring to change the conversation a little, 'that Miss Talbot is unable to bring music to aid her in her amusements; she was, I understand, so weak in her youth, that it was requisite to discontinue the best recreation afforded to our sex.'

'I am glad it was so, for her sake,' said Augustus Cæsar; 'for your brilliant execution would only have made her jealous; and any very great excitement might make her worse.'

'She has excitement enough, Captain Cornish,' said Miss Susan with an arch smile. 'I hope you have been to see her to-day, for she almost counts the hours of your absence.'

'I could wish others were equally solicitous of my visits, Miss Monckton. I leave you in safety beyond the lodge-gate. Good-morning.' And with a very elegant bow, he blushed deeply, and volunteered the English salute, the extension of the hand.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT GREAT CAPTAINS HAVE OBSERVANT EYES, AND THAT POVERTY IS NO BAR TO ADVANCEMENT.

BOWLING'S industry soon procured him favour and affection. He went in the frigate in which he had first become a volunteer to the West Indies, and was draughted with some other men into the *Hinchinbroke*, which ship was under the command of Captain Cuthbert Collingwood—he had just succeeded Captain Horatio Nelson. She was on an expedition to the Spanish main, whence it was proposed to pass into the South Seas by a navigation of boats along the river San Juan, and the lakes of Nicaragua and Leon.

The plan was formed without a sufficient knowledge of the country, which presented difficulties not to be surmounted even by the intrepidity of the commander, or the perseverance of the British seaman. It was dangerous to proceed on the river from the

rapidity of the current and the numerous falls over rocks which intercepted the navigation. The climate was too deadly, no constitution could resist its effects—sickness, disease, and death, marched uninterrupted over the soil, and the infection of pestilence prevailed over every precaution.

There were two hundred men belonging to the *Hinchinbroke;* of these, one hundred and eighty were buried by the miserable remnants of that ship. Nor was the mortality confined to that crew; each ship suffered in proportion, and thus terminated an ill-advised expedition. In the words of Captain Collingwood—'My constitution resisted many attacks, and I survived most of my ship's company, having buried in four months one hundred and eighty of the two hundred who composed it. Mine was not a singular case, for every ship which was long there suffered in the same degree. The transports' men *all* died, and some of the ships, having none to take care of them, sunk in the harbour; but transport ships were not wanted, for the troops whom they had brought were no more—they had fallen, not by the hand of the enemy, but from the contagion of the climate.'

In this dreadful service Bowling was engaged; no fatigue overcame, no sickness attacked him, he seemed singled out of the whole number to carry back to his native country his constitution unsapped and his strength undiminished. There was no danger in which he did not share, no exertion in which he was not a participator; the scorching heat of the noon-day sun, which levelled many a brave and good man, seemed not to molest him! and the cold damps of the nights, which brought on a host of fevers, seemed to give him fresh vigour.

As each bright morn rose to see the wreck of human ruin around, Bowling might have been observed, and was observed by his vigilant commander, hiding, for it could scarcely be called 'burying,' some unfortunate fellow, a victim to the pestilence. On one occasion a canoe was upset, in which were four men. The alligators swarmed in the river, and Death had spread many a net to catch his prey. Three of the men were fortunate enough to reach the shore, but the fourth was a weak swimmer, and was caught in a slight whirlpool, through the circles of which he had not strength to force himself, and was nearly exhausted and despairing of succour, sweeping down with the current without nearing the shore.

At the moment when his anxious shipmates had watched each struggle grow fainter, Bowling arrived on the bank. He had been employed in bringing up a lead-line to sound a part of the river which was deeper and freer from shoals than the general navigation. In an instant he comprehended the difficulty. He made the line fast to a small piece of wood, and giving the other end to his shipmates, he plunged into the water, succeeded in giving the wood into the hands of the sinking man, who grappled him and it in his fearful clutch. Both were dragged to the shore, and rescued from the voracious jaws of the river-monster, who followed his prey, of which he was baulked, to the very edge of the bank.

In this wretched climate, where joy was a stranger, the three cheers which welcomed the brave fellow back to his companions rang strangely through the wood. The very birds that had perched on the trees awaiting the repast, which was too frequently afforded, on the unburied dead, rose upon the wing; and then, undismayed even by the shout which was re-echoing through the forest, lazily returned to their perch, keeping ever near the men destined to afford another repast.

This conduct of Tom Bowling's met a proper reward. Nelson himself advised Collingwood to put him on the quarter-deck, and raise him to a volunteer, preparatory to his becoming a midshipman.

'We are too short of hands now, my dear Nelson,' remarked Bowling's captain; 'we cannot spare a man to make an officer.'

'It will have more effect upon the others now, Collingwood. A reward on the very scene of the action induces others to be foremost in danger.'

'You are right, Nelson; you are always right. Besides which, Bowling will lend a hand in any difficulty. Send Bowling here.'

Bowling was at that moment taking the precaution of drying himself and his clothes, for damp clothing in the sultry climates is, if possible, more dangerous than in colder regions. He came before the senior officer, Captain Nelson; the men nearest having been summoned to attend also, Nelson spoke to him—

'Your conduct, Bowling, has not been unobserved by me from the first moment we landed, and I am glad to learn from your captain that the character you brought from your last ship was as well merited there as any praise I could bestow upon you now. My men, let his conduct and his reward be an example and a spur to you *all;* we are in a perilous undertaking, and promotion should follow extraordinary exertion. You are, Bowling, no longer a foremast man—you are too young to be made a quarter-master, but you are not too old to be made a midshipman. Captain Collingwood will from this moment cause you to be rated as a volunteer of the first class, and, on your return to the ship, you will be promoted to a midshipman. Neither, *Mr.* Bowling' (the Mister sounded strangely in his ears), 'shall I lose sight of you. You are fortunately with one well able to discriminate true merit; and remember that his recommendation will be a passport to my protection.' Then turning to

the other captain, he added, 'I don't know, Collingwood, how we shall fit him out with a uniform, as we are not troubled with any excepting what those scavenger birds were kind enough to leave us!'

'It will not be long, I fear,' replied Collingwood, 'before he will be able to fit himself; as dead men's clothes are sold at the mast there can be no harm in his appropriating those of poor Hervey, who died this morning, and they can be charged to his account. Mr. Bowling, he continued, 'I act in this case not only under the directions of Captain Nelson, but in accordance with my own feelings. I should ill discharge my duty if I did not promote those who by their example and conduct merit advancement. You have, I hear, been well educated, and are therefore better able to appreciate advice. Do not allow this unexpected difference in your situation to relax either your industry or your exertion; the industrious ever thrive, the idle ever want. My eye will be upon you now more than ever it has been; because I must satisfy myself and the Lords of the Admiralty that I have not taken an unworthy person from before the mast to place him amongst gentlemen and officers. Beware of your conversation; you must change with your situation. I shall expect the most rigid attention in your conduct, and now place you as an officer and as a gentleman in whom I repose an equal confidence with those who are of your rank.'

Every man present gave Bowling three cheers; and Mr. Bowling walked away, the tears starting from his eyes, accompanied by some youngsters, all anxious to welcome him. Not one of the men seemed jealous of his advancement, although all envied his position. The golden prospects of those who decoyed him, under no idea of his realizing such advantages now, might one day be his lot; but the only expression which escaped him was the same which the great Lord Exmouth afterwards was heard to utter—'I have got my foot in the stirrup; it is my fault if I fail to mount.' His health was drunk by his messmates, and that evening Mr. Bowling commanded a party, dressed, as Collingwood had too surely predicted, in the uniform of the unfortunate Hervey.

Now it was that Bowling, eighteen years of age, courted the most rigid observance of his conduct. He was never known to touch spirits. Some habits caught from his former associates were discontinued with his discontinuance of a seaman's dress, and the instruction of his youth gave him the air, the manner, and the conversation of a gentleman. There was no service, however desperate, he did not court; he was everywhere. Nelson's quick eye perceived that in Tom Bowling an officer was growing whose reputation would be allowed by all in the service, and not unfrequently he spoke to Collingwood concerning him, and again and again promised him his protection. He more than once advised Bowling to be more cautious of his health, and was himself attacked by the fever; which nearly proved fatal to him at the very moment he was urging another to be less forward in adventure. Nelson forgot that it was his example Bowling was emulating; whilst the more prudent and cautious Collingwood advanced steadily, without the restlessness of his commanding officer, and escaped from that grave of British seamen, to return to Jamaica.

The expedition failed. 'Nelson,' in the words of Collingwood, 'received the infection of the climate before he quitted the port, and had a fever from which he could not recover, until he quitted his ship and went to England;' and Collingwood in the *Hinchinbroke*, with Bowling a rated midshipman, and scarcely hands enough to navigate his ship, sailed for Port Royal, in August, 1780. In December following he was appointed to the *Pelican*, a small frigate of twenty-four guns; and the foremast man, now an officer, had won so much upon the esteem of his commanding officer, that he was permitted to follow him into that ship.

The removal shook off a heavy load from the mind of Bowling; for although much attached to his shipmates, he felt the greatest delicacy and difficulty in performing his duty rigidly, without offending those from whose situation he had escaped. Now he was with those who had never commanded him; and although it was known he had risen thus unexpectedly, yet his manners were such that they universally believed he was born a gentleman, and had run away from his parents in his enthusiasm for the naval service. His frequent conversations concerning the late Mr. Monckton gave his messmates an idea that he was under false colours as to his name, and that before long he would be recognised as that clergyman's son. Bowling had some prize-money to receive, and although at that moment, in order to keep up appearances, he required every dollar, yet was he seen busily employed for more than one hour counting his money, buying English notes from those who had them, and afterwards getting into the snuggest corner of the berth, he rubbed his hands with a degree of satisfaction, and began to write a letter, which was seen to be directed to Miss Monckton.

If there is any real happiness in this miserable life, it is in its retrospect, when good actions arise upon the memory, and bring with them the same pleasurable feelings which were experienced when they were performed. Bowling was treasuring up happiness for the hereafter; he had all the

generosity, the known generosity, of the British seaman; he was kind in his manner grateful in his behaviour, submissive to his superior, and affable to those beneath him. He pictured to his mind the manner of his captain, and on all occasions where he was the commanding officer, endeavoured to imitate his mildness and his firmness.

In July in the following year, the yellow fever broke out in Jamaica, saving which malady, said an old West India merchant, the climate would be the best in the world. It was one of those pleasant seasons which render Jamaica cheap, from the superfluity of comestibles and the paucity of inhabitants. Many officers died, and Mr. Bowling was a purchaser of those uniforms which fitted his form, and which had been bought by some very affectionate parents for some future Benbow or Keppel. Yellow Jack destroyed many a bright prospect. Many a youngster who had risen with hope and heart both strong and free, before sunset was bled, blistered, and his head shaved, with the burning fever unabated. Here, attended by black people, with few comforts and no luxuries, in a ward where others were screaming in madness, or actually dying of the disease under which they were labouring, he could only leave the hospital to be conveyed to the palisades.

It became necessary to remove the ships from such destruction; and the *Pelican* amongst the rest put to sea. Bowling had escaped with a 'seasoning,' as it is termed. His hair was a little the shorter, his face a little the paler; but he was now voted secure, and had returned to his duty as active and as zealous as ever. The *Pelican* cruised from that time to the beginning of August off St. Domingo, and was on her return to Port Royal in the month of August. There had been a few prizes taken, all of which had been sent into harbour. The men had recovered from their attack, and the highest spirits prevailed; still, there was some apprehension that the fever would visit them again, and the friendship cemented in the hour of danger be broken by a day of sickness. The crew were weakened from the number of men in the prizes, and the officers reduced to watch and watch.

'I think,' said Bowling to the officer of his watch, 'that this must be the land on the lee-bow.'

The officer came, and giving a hasty glance, rebuked the look-out men forward for neglect of duty.

'It's only the land *breeze* coming off, sir,' said the seaman; 'it has just appeared, or I should have reported it before.'

The officer seemed satisfied with the answer, and said to Bowling, 'Your eyes are a little too quick to-night.'

'I hope, sir,' he replied, 'it may prove that my eyes are in error; but it looks so much like the land to me even now, that I am inclined to differ a little with the look-out man.'

'It is the land breeze, and we shall soon run right into it.'

Bowling suggested with great modesty that it was usually calm before that cool restoration came; but the lieutenant, a young man just promoted, and who was perhaps thinking more of harbour than of dangers, turned away and continued his quarter-deck walk.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN HOW THE TORCH OF HOPE BLAZES TO THE LAST, AND MAKES AROUND IT AN ATMOSPHERE OF LIGHT AND LIFE.

CAPTAIN AUGUSTUS CÆSAR CORNISH, who could not bear Miss Susan Monckton, had contrived to make himself especially civil and agreeable to her. He lied so much like truth that she was deceived; he never ventured upon the slightest freedom or rudeness, but conducted himself with such respect, that she never doubted his intentions towards his cousin, and frequently ventured on the conversation she believed most consonant with his wishes.

'It is, Captain Cornish, a dreadful blow suspended for a short season over your head; but I have no doubt, however poignantly you may feel its force, time and religion will afford you some relief. The medical men have announced that there are no hopes for your cousin without she could be removed to Lisbon or to Madeira. They believe the angel of death to be hovering over her couch, and have limited the short space of her life to two months.'

'I cannot believe you sincere, Miss Monckton, in this declaration,' replied Cornish, with wonderful melancholy of mein. 'If she died, I should mourn over her grave; but I have brighter views; I do not credit the dark forebodings of those men. The apothecary, a man who has attended our family for years, declares the expectoration of blood as perfectly trivial; the voracious appetite as a proof of returning health; he calls appetite health's barometer, and the flushing of the cheek the beautiful emblems of youth and modesty. I have a firm reliance in this man, and my hope gives me additional confidence.'

'She is anxious to see you. She herself was desirous I should prepare you for an interview which, under the circumstances even of the difference of opinion between the medical men from the doubt of any certainty of recovery, must be painful. I beg of you to command your feelings, for you will require all your courage to receive from her mouth this mournful preface to a last farewell. Oh, Captain Cornish, if ever there was an angel

on this earth, your cousin is that angel. It is now three years since I have been her companion: as her friend, she has told me of your mutual attachment; and in all her sickness and tribulation, your name has ever been on her lips. Never have I heard from her one word of reproach or hasty expression; but with patience and resignation she awaits that moment which no physician can prolong. Let me request you to discredit this country apothecary, and believe that no regular practitioner would have imparted such unwelcome tidings to the mother, or feelingly hinted it to the patient, but under the strongest conviction of the truth.'

Captain Cornish by no means relished this meeting, but he was a doomed man, and he went with as much coolness as he could command. He had never positively made his cousin an offer, but he perceived that she expected it. Although almost within the grasp of death, she pictured to herself a long life of pleasure, the invariable consequence of the fatal disease under which she laboured.

Cornish entered the apartment, and found his cousin, as usual, reclining on a couch near the window. It was a beautiful summer's day; all nature was smiling; the garden exhibited a profusion of flowers, the perfumes of which reached the couch of the invalid. There was the hectic flush, so delicately red, resting on her cheek; but she was dreadfully emaciated, and her long thin fingers felt hard and unfeminine as Cornish took her hand. The eye, bright and vivid, rested upon the fine features before her; and she first spoke, in a voice deeper than usual, but in her general strain of liveliness. 'Well, Augustus, never punctual—always a little too late: you would lose your promotion at the Horse Guards by being a quarter of an hour after the appointed time. Ah, you truant! I have heard of your pretty speeches to Miss Monckton, and your having waylaid her from the church. I shall be jealous, my fine cousin, if I hear of any more accidental meetings.'

'The greatest accident in life, I assure you. I was so occupied in thinking of you and our last conversation, that I took a contrary direction to that I had intended, and, to my great surprise, stumbled upon that girl.'

'Why, you went on purpose to aid her in her work of charity, and like the good Christian you are, enabled her to do much for those poor people.'

'The sudden thought of a second. It occurred to me she might imagine I had purposely come that road, and therefore I determined to account for the intrusion. Indeed, I was glad to have the opportunity of assisting Hodge; for although I have every disposition to relieve the wants of others, I have but little time to act up to my inclination—but enough of myself. I think you are looking better this morning.'

'I always look better when you are near; who else do I see but those wretched doctors, whose long faces quite scare me? It was but yesterday one of these melancholy personages began in a low tone of voice to speak of the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of a constant preparation for death; and he looked at me as if I was likely to be summoned. I could hardly resist smiling, for in the middle of his warning I thought how delightful it would be to have my box at the Opera next year, which mamma had promised me; and how pleased I should be at our rides in the Park.'

She had her hand in that of her cousin; and the last few words, accompanied as they were by a look which no lover, however cold, could mistake, suddenly awoke his sensibility.

'Yes, dearest,' he began (a tremor came over the sick girl) 'these doctors, whenever their antidotes fail, talk of that which is most familiar to them—death. It is a subject on which I hope we need not descant for years and years; there are brighter prospects, I trust, for both of us. The next season, I hope, will see my darling Rosa restored to her former health, and even the Opera become a secondary thought; for I would, if I dared venture, picture happiness more complete to yourself, by sharing it with me.'

A sudden burst of tears rendered her inaudible; but Cornish felt the increased pressure of the hand, and knew in that pressure that he had mentioned the subject nearest her heart.

'Come, dearest Rosa, let me dry those tears which I am vain enough to imagine are not tears of sorrow. I will hail your silence as an acceptance of that you could not have mistaken. We are not like strangers; we have known each other from our youth upwards, and I have felt that my greatest happiness was ever near you. There, now that you smile again, I will take from those rosy lips the consent that poor, weak woman's tongue is afraid to confess.'

He kissed her, he had kissed her often before; but never with the warmth of affection with which he now embraced her. An age of sickness and sorrow was obliterated in that moment; a glow of health and animation came over her countenance which would have deceived even the anxious eye of a mother; and at that moment Rosa never looked more beautiful. Long and anxiously she gazed at him without speaking; the heart was too full. All she had ever regarded as Paradise in this world was realized; her love was returned. She could now pour out her soul to the only man she ever regarded with the eye of affection, who was sitting by her side, her hands clasped in his.

'I have read,' she began, '"that a girl unasked may own a well-placed flame."

And I have long before this moment spoken of you with admiration to Susan; she has ever been the confidant of my affections, and she will hear this hour's conversation with almost as much pleasure as I shall relate it. Susan, too, likes you, Augustus. You must not any longer shun her because she is only my governess or companion. She is of good family; and she will be happy to forward our mutual views. I feel so much stronger, that I could almost walk in the garden; and I long to run to my mother and confess to her my acceptance of your love.'

'That, my dear Rosa, had better be deferred. It is useless trumpeting to the world our engagement. As yet you are too ill to be married. We can keep our own secret; and our constancy will best test our affection until the time when you are so far recovered as to be led to the altar.'

'I will be guided by you in everything, Augustus. Your words shall be my law; nay, do not look affronted at the word. A wife should obey; and I will practise that difficult task before marriage, in order better to conform to it hereafter.'

'Then let us see, my Rosa, if you can obey me in what I have heard is almost impossible in a woman.'

'There is nothing impossible when a woman loves, and her lover asks. I'll do it.'

'Then do not mention one word of this to Susan. I would rather it were kept a profound secret from all.'

'Why, you cruel hard-hearted soldier! you would rob me of my greatest delight, that of praising you to Susan,—of listening to her animated picture of you,—of hearing your name,—and of bringing you, when absent, near to myself by being occupied in conversation about you. You have asked, or ordered, the most cruel compliance to the most cruel order. I obey you; but may I ask why you wish it?'

A smile passed over his lips. 'I want to see how long a woman can keep a secret, which at present would be useless to divulge. Besides, my fair cousin, there is a little of man's vanity at the bottom of all this; and I will make a clear confession to you. There is no secret if more than one person besides the parties concerned know it. If we cannot keep it ourselves, it is rather too much to expect other people to do so; and thus I infer, that if Miss Monckton knew it, she would confide it to another, and I should hear of it at the county ball, and then what girl would dance her curls out with a man engaged to be married to another? Put it down, my Rosa, call it vanity or by any name you like, only oblige me—nay, obey me, in this my most particular request.'

'Well, well,' said Rosa, 'it is easily done, after all. I have only to keep silent; for if I speak, your name is so near my heart it will most certainly escape.'

Cornish kissed her affectionately as he took his leave, and scarcely had he left the room, when, the excitement being past, the poor weak girl fainted away.

'I hope,' said Susan, as she met the captain, who had again quite accidentally taken a wrong direction to his house, 'that you acted up to your promise, and spoke to your cousin in the serious manner her situation requires.'

'I never saw any one, Miss Monckton, so resigned to her fate. She spoke of the cruelty of being torn away so young from this world. She mentioned the physician's kind admonition; but she still, with a hope which seems beyond understanding, hinted at her probable recovery. There is no chance, I fear, of that; and may I trust, my dear Miss Monckton' (here the handsome captain took her hand) 'that you will continue that kindness, that affection for her, which you have ever manifested; that you, the very picture of good temper, will bear the hasty remarks, the frivolous complaints, without allowing yourself to be annoyed?'

'All I can do, Captain Cornish, to alleviate her wants, to console her in affliction, and to encourage her by a hope of the goodness of God hereafter, you may rely upon being done. She must now, whilst living, become dead to this world in her preparation for the next.'

'And fortunate beyond all imagination is that woman, who, at her last illness, has a companion so religious, so excellent, as yourself; who will kindly lean over the couch of sickness, forestall her very wants, soothe her anguish, and hold out the balm of relief before the complaint is uttered. To you in every confidence I leave her; she has ever been a favourite of mine, but nothing beyond a favourite. It would be highly criminal in any man to acknowledge, even if he felt it, a passion for one whose days are numbered, and whose grave I may almost say is prepared.'

'And yet, Captain Cornish, I think—pardon me for the liberty of intruding my thoughts—that your cousin would die happier if you would make some acknowledgment of a feeling she certainly experiences for you.'

'It is impossible, Miss Susan' (the gallant captain here advanced another step up the ladder of courtship); 'I cannot avow what I never experienced. Would you—you, who I believe the very pattern of your sex—would you recommend me to make an avowal at her last moments which is not founded on truth? I cannot tell a falsehood. From my youth to the present moment, no man ever believed me capable of such meanness; and I think I may conscientiously say, I never told an untruth in all my life.'

'Even I, Captain Cornish, whom you have so highly complimented, think there are circumstances which warrant a slight

deviation, not a wilful abandonment, of the truth ; and I think, since your cousin only seems to receive delight in your presence, that you might, even without exactly speaking, give her a prospect of realizing her fondest hope. It is indeed a nice point ; but it is hard to leave this world with our hearts so fixed upon one worldly point, that we cannot bring our minds to a due consideration of our awful state.'

'Why, it would be a mockery of that holy ceremony to carry almost a corpse to the altar, and swear to love and cherish it so long as I should live.'

'The oath would not bind you long ; but I am bound to say, your views are most honourable. There are many men who would rejoice to marry her now, and thus secure her property. If my opinion could have been heightened of Captain Cornish, his generous behaviour in this point would have raised it—who would not seek the hand of any one for the sake of her fortune.'

'Never woman spoke truer, Miss Susan. I would rather be loved for myself, and I would rather love her whose fortune never tempted me into her society. I shall call every day now ; and I hope I may sometimes have the good fortune to meet Miss Susan.' So saying, Captain Cornish, having wound up his hypocrisy, struck across the road to his father's house.

The last sentence was not lost upon Susan ; and as she pondered over his sayings, his honourable conduct, his kind expressions, she thought how sad it was to be hurled from her proper situation in life, where she could command respect, to the level of a governess. In the midst of her reflections she arrived at Mrs. Talbot's door, and received from the servant a letter written in a strange hand, and with a foreign post-mark.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT THE YOUNG OF A PELICAN DO NOT ALWAYS THRIVE ON ITS BLOOD.

It was nearly the end of the hurricane season—but hurricanes sometimes extend their visits, and then disasters accompany their line of march. Bowling's eyes were soon directed from the leeward to the weather side. There was gathering on the horizon a large black cloud, in the centre of which was a round clear space ; it seemed quite a contradiction to the surrounding gloom. With a rapidity perfectly astounding, the whole horizon to windward became dark, and sounds were heard aloft like the rushing of contrary winds.

In this fast approaching enemy all thoughts of the land wind were soon lost. The hands were turned up, and Collingwood, as he looked to windward, was the first to call out 'Bear a hand, my lads, aloft ; furl everything !' And turning to the first lieutenant, he desired him to strike the top-gallant yards and mast, to pass additional lashings round the quarter boats, and hasten every preparation which could make the ship snug. 'That,' he said, as he looked at the round clear part,—'that is the eye of the hurricane, and aloft the wind is already over us.'

The *Pelican* was in good order, but there was a slight confusion at the unusual summons. Still a general activity prevailed. The pipe was given to 'furl sails,' and as there was then but little wind, everything was made safe and snug. Then came 'down top-gallant yards and masts,' and by following up one order by another, as the duty of the first was completed, the little *Pelican* was getting ready to meet the attack of the furious enemy.

In the execution of these duties Captain Collingwood was most active. But in passing along the lee gangway to the forecastle, where he was anxious to see that some orders had been executed, he was surprised to see Bowling apparently perfectly inactive, leaning his chin on his hands, and, if not asleep, in the attitude generally observed when midshipmen are, like hackney-coach horses, taking a standing doze. He called him in a voice full of anger and astonishment, and expressed his wonder that at such a moment one who had experienced such favour and promotion should be asleep.

Bowling answered equally surprised, and with more than usual haste, and less of his usual submission—

'I never sleep, sir,' he said, 'when danger unexpected is at hand ! I was satisfying myself that my eyes had not deceived me before I ventured to apprize you of that of which at this moment you are ignorant !'

'Pray what may that be, sir?' said Collingwood, evidently annoyed at the answer, which at that moment he believed an evasion.

'Those are the Morant Keys to leeward,' said Bowling, as he pointed to a low black line hardly perceptible in the horizon.

'Impossible !' replied his captain, alarmed at the very suggestion of a greater danger than the one now near at hand.

'I mentioned it, sir, to the officer of the watch before that hurricane cloud appeared to windward ; the darkness of that cloud has made the part of the horizon beyond its extension more discernible. I am satisfied that is the land.'

The Morant Keys were exactly in the lee-beam ; and most certainly hope itself could not have believed them more than five miles distant. To those who looked with the cool consideration of the danger, undismayed by the probable result, that distance would be reduced to at least three miles,—a distance so perfectly insignificant, that one hour would

be sufficient to drive the vessel, against every effort to counteract it in a hurricane, on the rocks.

The orders were given to clear away the bower-anchors; to bend the sheet-cable; but nothing as to the alteration of the vessel could be effected. The sails were all furled, and to windward were clouds sufficiently threatening to oblige the most anxious to keep them so.

It was about this time, when by the means of the night-glass no doubt remained as to the dark mark to leeward being the land, that the wind was heard aloft whistling and roaring, whilst below it was a dead calm. This extraordinary phenomenon attracted the attention of all. The dog-vane made of feathers never moved; there was the most awful stillness in the lower regions of the atmosphere, whilst at a very small distance from the topmast-head all the furies of elemental war seemed striving for pre-eminence.

The clouds had now extended themselves from a little on the lee-bow to right astern, and the moon, which an instant before was unclouded, was suddenly covered as with a large dark veil. Every man stood in awful suspense, and each bold seaman wound himself up to meet undismayed an enemy as impossible to conquer as to evade. The vessel lay waiting the attack: 'no force could then resist, no flight could save.' The howling of the storm grew louder and louder, and once the loose ropes at the topmast-head blew out like the lightest pendant in a breeze.

It was now upon the water everywhere. To windward, to leeward it seemed breaking at once like a huge wave upon the shingles of the shore. In spite of the darkness the foam of the sea was plainly visible; and whilst remarking this to the first-lieutenant, as Collingwood whispered his apprehension for the safety of the ship, the whole fury of the hurricane burst upon the vessel. She reeled over to starboard for a second, when, being met by a counter squall, she heeled over to port. No orders could be heard; each man clung to the cleats and ropes. The spray flew like a sea over her; and the wind, which blew apparently from every quarter at once, sprinkled it lavishly on the deck. The precautions so carefully taken saved the masts; but the wind in one of its most furious squalls shook the starboard quarter boat with such violence that a part of the gunwale was blown adrift, and the bolt to which the slings were fastened was drawn.

It was most desirable to ascertain if, in this furious war of winds, the ship neared the Morant Keys; but the old quartermaster, who, undismayed at the danger, stood by the wheel, declared that no man could tell which way the vessel had drifted; for no sooner had the wind appeared to come from the east, than it as suddenly shifted to the west; and that already the head of the vessel had gone round the compass three or four times. It was equally impossible to see the approach to any danger, the spray was so thick, and now the night so dark that no man could discern a line-of-battle ship had she been there at the distance of one hundred yards. The wind howled and roared; the spray came like a sea; the ship swayed to and fro, sometimes running a-head at the rate of ten knots an hour, then as suddenly check into stern way, with her head in every position. And in this fearful uncertainty was she retained for at least a quarter of an hour, when the wind seemed inclined to settle to the north-eastward, and continue a heavy gale. Again it suddenly shifted with apparently accumulated force; for the main-topmast was snapped short off, and the jib-boom was carried away. Again the wind seemed disposed to settle to the north-west, leaving the *Pelican* on a lee-shore; and that lee-shore, providing every chance had been in her favour, not more than four miles distant.

As the prospect of the gale becoming steady increased, the energy of the captain increased also. The courses and topsails had been furled without being reefed; and in order to show them at all to the furious gale, it was requisite to close reef one, and reef the other. Then was, indeed, the danger; for the sail, when released from the gaskets, would be partially subject to the wind; and however well it might be retained in the clue-lines and bunt-lines, yet such was the force of the hurricane, that it might be split even in that situation, or breaking adrift from the slender ropes which confined it, might blow over the lee-yardarm, and sweep the clinging seamen from their hold.

It is in situations such as these that the courage and the seamanship of British tars have ever been shown; and never did they better deserve the praise their captain lavished upon them than on this night. But in spite of every precaution, the furious gale caught in the mainsail. It tore the sail from its protecting rope; it was split to ribbons, and there flapping about with a violence quite inconceivable to those who never have witnessed a scene like the present, it seemed to defy every exertion either to furl or to unbend it.

With the other sails they had been more fortunate, for they contrived to close reef the three topsails and foresail, and the last sail was set. A trysail was got up abaft, the wind having so far settled and moderated as to allow the *Pelican* to appear under some canvas; but what could be done without the mainsail?—literally nothing. And although many had made attempts to lie out on the yard, they were as often obliged to return and seek shelter on the top. Rewards were offered—threats, cheers, every extreme was resorted to; but no sailor could face the

difficulty. Whilst the captain was roaring through his speaking-trumpet, which scarcely conveyed the voice to the hearing of the men aloft, Bowling was seen descending the main-lift on the weather side. He reached the yardarm, and instantly began to cut the sail away. As it became liberated, it of course blew over to leeward; and thus the great end was accomplished. The useless canvas was entirely cut away from the yard, and a new mainsail was got up and prepared for bending. In the meantime the gale continued; and as the heavy clouds which had enshrined the hurricane were dissipated, when the winds broke loose, the moon was again visible; and with its clear light came the certainty of shipwreck.

The sea, which was high, prevented the *Pelican* from fore-reaching much, and the Morant Keys extended to about two points on the lee-bow. To veer would be to run closer to the shore, and on the starboard tack there was equally little hope of clearing the rocks which extended from the further end of the Key. The main-topmast was cleared away; the stump sent on deck, and the mainsail set. It was entirely useless. Every time the ship lifted to the sea, the land was more plainly visible. Hope only could suggest the avoiding the wreck, until daylight, now within an hour of breaking. The wind in the meantime seemed to moderate as the approach of the sun grew nearer. And some who clung to hope with most tenacity, talked of the possibility of tacking; and that then, under the fore and mizzen topsails with reefed courses, a fore-topmast-staysail, and a reefed driver, they might yet weather the danger.

Captain Collingwood, with the coolness which ever distinguished that officer in the days of his early command, gave his orders with clearness and precision. The booms were not cut adrift, as the motion of the ship was too violent; but men were stationed with axes ready to effect this when it became impossible to avoid the shock now growing closer and closer. The same orders were given for the quarter-boats; loose gratings were placed where they would float clear of the ship; and no one precaution was omitted which the wisdom and experience of former seamen had handed down to their successors. In this severe trial, the dauntless courage of the officers inspired the men with confidence; the wind roared, the sea raged, and the surf beat against the rocks, which the first streak of daylight made visible to all. The discipline of the ship remained unimpaired; and the men stood at their station for bringing the ship to an anchor, without attempting to seek a more comfortable or a less hazardous place.

When daylight broke there was yet half-an-hour of existence left. Soundings were ineffectually tried for; one hundred and eighty fathom of line reached no bottom; and it was well known by the experienced in those seas, that near the shore the water was too deep for anchorage. It was suggested to unclench one cable and to splice it to another, thus making about two hundred and forty fathoms; but the master shook his head, and declared it was useless.

To wear ship, if she failed to stay, was now hinted at by the first-lieutenant. It was one of those desperate chances just as well to try, since persevering in the same course was certain ruin. The surf beat high over the rocks which appeared showing their treacherous heads as the towering sea passed over them; and on these rocks it was almost certain that the ship would go during the manœuvre. It was the only chance left to avoid the danger under the lee-bow, and it was resorted to. The ship was kept quite full, with her head actually towards the rock, and she soon gathered good way. A smoother place was watched for in the roll of the seas. The helm was put gently down—the fore-topmast staysail was hauled down, the foresail hauled up as it touched. Every scientific manœuvre was used to coax her round; but as she came up to the wind, a sea struck her on the weather-bow, it stopped the little way she had; she fell round off; and before the ship gathered way enough to make the helm useful, she struck upon the outer rock. The foremast went by the board; the mizzen-topmast came down by the run; and the grinding keel, torn from its strong fastenings, floated alongside. The booms were cut adrift. Disorder and confusion usurped the place of obedience and discipline. The *Pelican* had ceased to exist. Her wreck, her loss, was inevitable.

When she struck, some boys shrieked at the danger, and were rushing to the lee-gangway. Bowling stopped them, and taking them away from all danger from the fall of the mainmast, said authoritatively, 'Stick by the wreck. It's time enough to take to the water when we have no dry footing left.' Another sea washed the ship on an inner rock, which was partially under shelter of the outer one; and fortunately she rested upon this, or she would have sunk. It stove her in about ten feet before the step of the mainmast; and as she rolled to the sea, which now made a clear breach over her, the planks gave way, and the rock appeared further and further in the ship.

Some hasty rafts were constructed; some clung desperately to the spars as they were swept clear of the ship, and trusted to the goodness of Providence and their own exertions; others took a wild farewell, and leapt headlong into the angry surf; others lashed themselves on gratings; some rushed to the quarter boat, cut her adrift, and leapt into the sea, and clung to her keel as she rolled over and over.

The sea came rolling along as fiercely and

as savagely as ever, although the wind had considerably abated. The mainmast fell over the starboard side, and took with it a considerable part of the upper bulwark: and it was evident that two or three more seas would split the *Pelican* to pieces. Bowling still clung to the wreck. He lashed the boys, who clung trembling to the spot he had assigned them, to different spars, and he launched them overboard, cheering them with the hope that others had already reached the land, and that the same Providence which guided and directed their shipmates through the foaming breakers might still watch over them and bring them safe to the Sandy Key, now their only refuge.

'Hold on, youngsters,' he cried, 'and shut your mouths. It's no use bellowing now. Cling to your hold, and God protect you.'

He had launched the last, who cried and clung to him, calling on his mother and father for succour, when Captain Collingwood touched him on the shoulder.

'If you live, Bowling, England will see in you one whom she may regard with pride. If I live, I am your guardian; and should I die, I leave behind me a prayer for your welfare through life. Remember the promise of Nelson; tell him at my last moment I bequeathed you to him. Now leave the wreck; —I will be the last man in my ship.'

'It is the only command I am likely to disobey, sir,' replied Bowling, who answered with as much coolness as if no danger was near. 'I must see you safe, and then I will trust to my arms and to my own good fortune.'

'No, no, Bowling; I *will* be the last man. Hold on, hold on! this sea will annihilate us all.'

It came howling and foaming over the outer rock, which it seemed to pass uninterrupted. It dashed full upon the *Pelican*. The devoted vessel split asunder; and the two last on board, the captain and Bowling, were precipitated into the sea. Bowling was a strong swimmer, and soon caught hold of one of the many planks which now almost covered the sea. He launched it towards his captain, who saw the generous effort, and availed himself of it. Whilst Bowling, trusting to his strength, struck out for another; —he clutched it, and used his utmost power to reach the shore. The heavy surf rolled him over, and almost buried him; but he rose superior to it, and every time he came to the surface he turned his anxious eye towards the man who, on the verge of death, had thought of him.

In the meantime many had reached the Key; and some not injured in the swim had unwound the light rope which had fastened the raft together, and used it as well as they were able, to throw to others as they neared the shore, and thus some almost on the point of being drowned from exhaustion had been saved. The generous fellow who used this remedy followed the sea as it ebbed back from the shore, and thus got nearer the object, at the risk of being again sucked into the foaming water.

Bowling was some distance ahead of his captain, for he did not cling to his plank until the sea came towards him; then, as it passed, he propelled it forward, and thus got nearer and nearer the shore. He caught the rope, and was dragged into security; but it was instantly to return to danger. Although his captain was yet out of reach, he twice endeavoured to force his way through the rolling breakers, and take the rope to him. Each time he was dashed back upon the shore; and the last time stunned by the effect. He was rescued by the officer of his watch, and lay extended on the beach.

For a long time the fate of the captain was precarious; his youth, his courage, his hope bore him up, and he reached the shore in security. Not one soul was lost; a watch-bill in the pocket of one of the youngsters served as a muster-roll, and an hour after the captain touched the shore, every man of the *Pelican* answered his muster. The difficulty had but begun. The Morant Keys are low sandy islands in which there is very little vegetation, and less sustenance for hungry shipwrecked seamen. Rarely is a turtle found, and in stormy weather they never come near the land. A cask of salt pork was luckily cast on shore, but not until the second day, when the gale still continued, and any attempt by any ingenuity to reach Jamaica was held impossible.

This cask of pork was husbanded with niggardly care; and portioned out at one quarter of the usual allowance. Water was procured by means of holes dug in the sand; but there was no covering from the sultry noon-day sun, or from the more baneful effects of night damps, and the moon's putrefying power. It was expected by the surgeon that fever would take what the gale had spared; but singular as it may appear, it is no less true, the excitement of the situation, the constant hope of release, and perhaps the very low simple diet, warded off all attacks of the fever and kept the crew in health.

As the different spars were washed on shore, the crew were employed in converting them into large rafts. There were several boat oars secured, and thus a chance was created of effecting a landing in Jamaica, when the gale ceased, and the usual smooth water nights succeeded. This kept the men in employment, or there might have been some discontent. Idleness is ever fruitful of mischief. For ten days did the crew of the *Pelican* remain on the Keys, and no chance had offered of escape. A boat washed on shore was made partially seaworthy, Bowling was sent to Jamaica to apprize the senior

officer of the desperate state of the crew, and reached his destination in safety.

The last piece of pork had been distributed. Famine stared them in the face, when the *Diamond* frigate hove in sight, and, attracted by the signals made from the Keys, she stood close in. The crew of the ill-fated *Pelican*, not a vestige of which remained, were received on board, and all were safely landed at Port Royal.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH IS A SAILOR'S LOVE-LETTER, AND A SPICE OF FEMININE MANŒUVRES.

SUSAN, on receiving the letter, went to her own apartment, and closing the door, examined with care the seal, the direction, and the post-mark. It frequently happens, that even the most curious lose five or six minutes in guessing by the seal from whom the letter comes, when by opening it all doubts would be removed. 'I neither know the seal nor the hand-writing,' she said to herself as she turned it from one side to the other; and then, as if some evil was foreboded, with trembling hand she opened it. Great was her surprise to find four five-pound notes fall from the folds; and at once, without looking at the beginning, she turned to the conclusion, and saw the name of Thomas Bowling. Thus it ran:—

'Jamaica, June, 1781.

'MISS MONCKTON—There never yet was a long lane that had neither end nor turning; and so it is with bad fortune or ill luck, it's sure to take another course in time, and get us into a snug anchorage. The tide at first set strongly against me. I thought I should have grounded with the ebb, and never got afloat again; but all of a sudden in came the flood, and swept me clear of the shoals into fair weather and pleasant prospects. I left you nearly aground too. I hope you have held on, although the cable was two parts stranded; and that the enclosed will put some new rigging over your mast-head, and make you as trim and as neat below and aloft as you always were when you patted me on the head, and said, "Well done, Bowling." I never shall forget your sweet face; and when I prove ungrateful for all your kindness, may I be blown away in a hurricane. No, no; whichever course I steer, Susan is before me—my hope, my haven; every wind which blows bears your name upon its wings. And there is no lighthouse in the stormy night half so welcome as the beam of those dark eyes.

'I left you to be a cabin-boy in a collier. I am now a midshipman in the *Pelican*. Before me is every bright prospect; and I have left behind me the shoals and the shallows of life. Take the trifle I have enclosed; and when we come athwart any more of the French vessels, you shall halve my prize money, as I value your life equally with my own. Oh, for the day when I shall see you again, and learn from you how you have weathered the squalls which threaten to dismast you. Until then give poor Tom a corner in your heart. The tide may set against me, the winds may be unfavourable, my friends may prove false, poverty may overtake me; but nothing can rob my heart of your image, as no other portrait can efface the remembrance thereon engraven. May He whom you taught me to know, hear my prayers for your guidance and safety. I lower my flag as I salute yours; and as I write this respectfully, I hope I may not be thought impertinent. I remain, Miss Monckton,

'One grateful for your kindness—one who prays for your safety,

'THOMAS BOWLING.

'P.S. If ever you see the German doctor, say Tom lives, and will one day shake him by the hand. And if you could find out what was my father's name, and who I am, just tip me a stave; for somehow I think I was a gentleman's son, kidnapped by the dog-stealer.'

This production was read by Susan again and again. The tears came in her eyes when she thought that out of all her pretended friends, in the hours of her affluence, not one had proffered her assistance; and that the fatherless boy, taken from the grave of a convicted scoundrel, and taught by her the first rudiments of knowledge: buffeted about in life, without a friend to assist, with no prospect of reward, save that arising from good behaviour, had thought of her when separated thousands of miles, and had sent as a free gift, perhaps the whole of his little stock, earned at the risk of death before the cannon's mouth.

In that moment Susan experienced perfect happiness. Her pupil had risen to be an officer by his own good conduct; and that good conduct was the result of her exertions. Nor could she forget, that when that youngster embarked in the low drudgery of a cabin-boy, he had left for her every farthing he had in the world, and began life a penniless child of fortune.

Then again the letter contained more than gratitude; it bore in the rough language of the sailor the finest sentiments of the heart. It merely required the common exertion of the mind to render his rude phrases into the warmest effusion of love; and Susan, overcome by this unexpected gratitude, found her heart beat with an emotion she had never before experienced.

She had lingered longer than usual, and

Rosa now expected her; for Susan was the companion most welcome when Cornish was absent.

The lively air with which Susan entered excited the attention of her companion: whilst, on the other hand, the attenuated form, the fast-falling cheeks of the invalid, struck Susan with a momentary horror.

'Welcome, Susan, welcome. You are late; but your cheerful looks betoken some good news. A letter! why, with the exception of those written by your mother, I never knew you receive any correspondence. A man's hand, too—what marvel is this?'

'Yes, indeed, a letter from a friend—from a lover—from Tom Bowling—the poor boy of whom I have already spoken; say not now that the world is composed of the false-hearted, the selfish, the interested. There is nothing in its contents of which I am ashamed. Read it; it has made me the happiest of women; for it is the hand of a grateful—an honourable man.'

Rosa laughed at the unusual style, and said she required an interpreter.

'You would not require one, Rosa, if the letter had been addressed to you; only put these words into others more familiar to our ears, and what could the warmest lover add to it?'

'Lord, my dear Susan, how can stranded cables, ebbs and flood-tides, rigging and mast-heads, be turned into a lover's epistle?'

'What do you think of that part which speaks of the portrait? and what say you to the poor fellow who robs himself of his all, to send me what he can ill afford to spare?'

'Bless me, Susan, if you are not in love with that rough sailor who is going to be blown away in a hurricane—'

'If a grateful heart is a proof of affection, and affection is the touchstone of love, I am in love, nor do I blush to confess it. How can I be otherwise with one who wafts my name on every breeze?'—and she added, laughingly, 'he really is very good-looking.'

'Wait, child, until next season, and I will find you a lover as handsome as my Captain Cornish.'

'Ah,' she continued, 'Captain Cornish is indeed handsome; but we are not all Rosa Talbots, with her fortune and her eyes to captivate such heroes. I hope your last interview with him relieved your mind of all its anxieties, for this love conversation of mine is neither fit nor wholesome for either of us now.'

'Susan, my dear, I feel so uncommonly well this morning that I cannot allow you to enact the ruler. I have a secret to tell you, Susan; but are you quite sure that you would not whisper it even in the ears of your Tom Bowling. Heavens! what a name!—one might as well marry Ben Backstay, who, you know, according to the song, "was a sailor and a very merry boy."'

'Oh, dearest Rosa, do not, I beseech you, waste your time in the remembrance of such sayings. Why talk of this world's love, when our thoughts should be directed to a more pure, a more heavenly love, in the situation in which it has pleased God to place you, with the knowledge that your physicians have imparted to you. Let me implore you to devote your time to those books which alone can give support and consolation.'

It so happened that Rosa Talbot was in one of those intervals so common in the disease under which she was gradually sinking. She was certain of a long life, and had suggested to herself schemes worthy of the most robust health. She saw before her days of happiness as the wife of Cornish—the envy of some who already admired him — the despair of others who had for ever lost him; and strange it is that in these disgraceful moments, when 'envy, hatred, and jealousy,' are the thoughts, we sometimes derive the keenest pleasure. She had quite forgotten the hint of the doctors, and was in no mood to be lectured.

'I asked you, Susan,' she said, rather abruptly, 'if I can confide a secret to you—one you must not mention again hardly to yourself. I thought in you I had found a companion and a friend.'

'And do you doubt it now, Rosa, when I am using the greatest privilege of a friend—that of an adviser? Had I not known how devoted this poor heart is to your service, I never should have intruded my counsels, or hazarded your last remark. Do not, I beseech you, Rosa, look doubtingly upon me. I have no wish beyond your happiness, and I gladly devote myself to your service.'

'Kiss me, Susan; forgive me if I offended you. I will show you I still rely upon you—that I still think you my dearest friend. I have not even told it to my mother, although she half guessed it from my manner. I am going to be married!'

Susan shrank backwards with dismay, believing that the unrelenting disease under which her poor friend laboured had not only sapped her bodily, but impaired her mental strength. 'Married!' she exclaimed.

'Yes, Susan, married; and before six weeks are elapsed, I shall be the wife of the only man I ever loved. Why do you look so fearfully upon me? I have not robbed *your* heart. Ever since I knew *him*, he has been devoted to me; and at last he has confessed his love, and I have accepted his offer.'

It was impossible for Susan to doubt that Cornish had deceived her by his narration of the conversation; but she could not recover herself. Before her, extended upon a sofa, from which she could not rise without assistance, reposed, if such a state could warrant the term, the bones of her friend—evidently within the six weeks she would be wedded to a colder bridegroom. That no skill could

restore her was certain; and instead of preparing herself for her approaching dissolution, her heart was fixed upon an object evidently too unworthy of her.

At once to turn her thoughts from the bright prospect of life to the cold reality of death was a cruelty; but to allow her to linger longer in a disregard of her perilous condition was criminal. To refuse to listen to her tale of love would only have irritated the invalid; but to have joined in her rapture, Susan considered, would be highly blameable.

'Your mother,' said Susan, after a pause, 'is ignorant of this marriage. It is, my dear Rosa, very wrong in a daughter to conceal from her parent such a declaration as you have received. She is your best friend, as well as your mother. From her you should have no secret; for that which is improper for her to *know* is unworthy of you to *do*. Let me call her;—let me, if you are unable to tell her yourself, impart to her this intelligence.'

'On no account, Susan. I feel I have done wrong in relating the secret I had promised never to reveal, to you, and pardon me if I say, I had expected from one who has ever called herself my friend, some expression of congratulation—some wish for my happiness—my welfare—my health.'

'And if my congratulations, Rosa, my wishes, could avail, how soon and how very fervently would I express them. I cannot, with the remembrance of the last injunctions of my father, picture that which never can exist. I would not have you violate your word further than you have done at this moment. He will be here shortly. Do an act of justice to yourself and to your mother. Tell him your surviving parent is your proper guardian and protector;—insist on his declaring to your mother the affection he has expressed for you; and warn him that, when he is gone, your duty to your parent will not be omitted.'

'And why, if Captain Cornish wishes this a secret, should I disoblige him by revealing it?'

'It cannot long remain a secret, Rosa. You cannot buy your bridal dress—make any preparation for your marriage—without your mother's knowledge; and therefore, even taking the subject in this light, it is better to make a virtue of necessity, and mention that yourself which your actions must declare hereafter. Besides this, how long do you think a lady has a secret, to which her maid is a stranger? I tell you, Rosa, that lovers always write notes, and ladies'-maids always peep into them. What would your mother think if the first intimation of her daughter's engagement came through the scullery-maid? For no sooner will your maid have discovered it than Robert the butler will be made a confidant; it will be told as a secret, never to be divulged, to the housekeeper; the housekeeper will condescend to relate it to the coachman; the coachman will tell the groom that his young missus is going to be married; it will be whispered to the housemaid at some *accidental* meeting; and the last of the household below, the scullery-maid, will be entrusted with it. Since, my dear Rosa, you could not keep it yourself, it is hard to expect secrecy from others. On this ground alone, for at this moment I will not suggest any other, I call upon your good sense to second my proposition. Now I leave you, for here is Captain Cornish. He dines here to-day, of course—a lover could not be so long absent as one evening!'

'Ah! ah!' faintly laughed the invalid. 'And now, Susan, you will have time to read your sailor's letter over again, and to spoil half-a-dozen sheets of paper in attempting to answer it.'

'No, no, Rosa,' she replied smilingly; 'it is easy to be grateful; and the fewer words and the more actions, are the best responses. The captain is here! I will escape through your maid's room.'

That Susan was right in her conjectures as to the intuitive knowledge of her friend's maid was certain. Miss Waller, who, of course, could not be called by such a vulgar appellation as Betsy, had brought her work very close to the door, and had heard every syllable which had been uttered. She regarded Miss Monckton as not one bit better than herself; and as Susan, in passing through her room, which was an unusual proceeding, apologized for disturbing her, she was quick enough to perceive the malicious sneer with which she was welcomed.

Even Susan, generally above the little weakness of the sex—curiosity, on closing the outer door, could not refrain from peeping through the keyhole; and saw the faithful Waller place her ear so close to the door which led to Rosa's apartment, that it was evident it was her intention to burden herself with the secret her dying mistress could not retain.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT A LADY'S-MAID NEVER MISSES A GOOD OPPORTUNITY OF MAKING MISCHIEF.

'COME, sit close to me, Augustus. Now for the news; but first look at that clock—a lover should be before, not after his time. I thought the lazy hand which marks the minutes never would gain the spot when five would strike. At last it came, and since then a quarter of an hour has flown.'

Augustus took her hand, but there was that constrained look about him, that evident carelessness, as if he did from duty what

might have been expected from love. Usually, he was cheerful, loquacious, and quick; now he was reserved, cautious, and silent. He squeezed her hand, and, after passing his unemployed fingers hurriedly across his forehead, he said, 'You have told your mother of our engagement?'

'Indeed, Augustus, I have not;' but she said, as she recapitulated Susan's arguments, 'The sooner she is told, the better.'

'It must *not* be,' he added, with some vehemence. 'Your mother would never give her consent, and we should become estranged even for the short time——' He paused—he was evidently about to inflict the severest wound the invalid could receive; and even he, who, having caught the hint given by Susan that a marriage would gain him the property without being long encumbered by the wife, forbore to mention death, when death was more certain than her marriage.

'I am certain of my mother's consent, Augustus. There is no one thing I could ask to which she would not accede; and this, the object nearest my heart—this, which already has made me strong and restored me to health, do you think she would refuse? Oh no! she is much too affectionately fond of me. You shall see how badly you have estimated her kindness. I will mention the subject to her this night, and to-morrow my Augustus shall be welcomed as her son-in-law.'

'I would rather the secret were never divulged,' said Captain Cornish abstractedly; 'for it is useless to believe this marriage could ever be consummated.'

The invalid endeavoured to raise herself up, but in this she failed. Her hoarse voice seemed deeper as she added, 'You have deceived me; you love another!' Most fortunately for Captain Cornish, he was saved the explosion which he himself had caused by the announcement of dinner; and he was quick enough to follow the servant, leaving Rosa in a state more easily imagined than described.

No sooner was he gone than Waller entered the room. Such was her invariable custom, as her mistress was scarcely ever left alone, and at this hour some refreshment was always offered. Waller was just as well aware of the secret as if it had been placarded on the walls; and, hating Susan with a hate only known to exist between ladies'-maids and governesses, she resolved to frustrate any kind intentions which before long Rosa might be inclined to manifest in her last will. She had some money at her own disposal; and, from the intimacy subsisting between her and Susan, it was more than probable that some of that property would be left to her friend.

'I'll pay you off,' said the jade to herself. 'I'm afraid you have exerted yourself too much, miss,' she remarked to Rosa; 'and whilst Captain Cornish is eating his dinner with Miss Monckton, you had better refresh yourself with a little broth.'

'Surely my mother, Waller, dines at home?' said Rosa.

'Yes, miss, she does; but as your mother's solicitor is here, and there seems some business of importance, your mother is not at dinner, nor will she join that party until eight o'clock.'

'Well, well,' said Rosa, 'I am not sorry for the interruption, as the Captain will the sooner return, and I have much to say to him.'

'I should rather think, miss, it will keep him the longer away. Perhaps he may be inclined to take one of his usual walks with Miss Monckton, and then it might be proper to await your mother's arrival, and then——'

'A walk!' interrupted Rosa, apparently somewhat disturbed by the intelligence.

'Oh, it's nothing unusual, miss, I assure you. They do make the most unaccountable mistakes. One takes the wrong turning to the place she is going, and Captain Cornish takes the wrong one also, and somehow they both meet.'

'Well, Waller, and what of all this? May not Captain Cornish by accident meet Miss Monckton?'

'Oh yes, miss, no doubt; but then it's a pity when he sees her he does not look both sides of the hedges. They say walls have ears; I know quick-set hedges do not much interrupt the sound, however much they may hinder the sight. Bless you, miss, Captain Cornish is over head and ears in love with you, and Miss Monckton is just as much in love with him. She can't keep her eyes off him; and the other day——'

'Well?' ejaculated Rosa, almost overpowered even with the slight exertion required to produce the sound, 'what occurred the other day?'

'Oh dear me, miss, you would not ask me to speak of that which I quite accidentally heard; it would be quite improper—you really must excuse me, miss—shall I get you some broth?'

The poison began to work. The very helpless situation of Rosa made her more alive to jealousy than otherwise her nature would have permitted. Now awakened, as it were, from her dreams of love by the cunning cruelty of her maid, she brought to her mind the different conversations she had held with Susan, that appeared to strengthen the suspicions Waller had awakened. 'Yes, yes!' she exclaimed hurriedly, at intervals, 'so she did, and admired him to my face. How blind—how blind is love!'

'Yes, miss,' said Waller, apparently unconscious of the mischief she had created—'so it is, miss. We have got a figure of it in the housekeeper's room, with a bandage round its eyes, and with a pair of scales in its hands.'

'That is the figure of Justice,' said Rosa, catching at the last remark.

'Is it, miss?' said the artful girl. 'Well, I have heard that there is very little justice in love, for its course never ran smooth and without interruption.'

'Oh!' sighed Rosa, 'oh for one real friend! Waller, you have lived with me for four years, and I have ever been kind to you. Cannot I place confidence in you?'

'Oh, certainly, miss: nothing I should like so much. And as for secrets, I never say a word about them, although I think Miss Monckton will tell yours to your mother.'

'What do you mean, Waller? Of what secret do you speak?'

'Oh, nothing particular, miss, only the secret of your heart. A person must be as blind as a beetle not to see how you change colour whenever the captain is mentioned; and it makes me so uneasy. Ah! indeed I could tear his eyes out when I see that he comes into this room without hesitation, but that when he speaks to that beautiful girl below he is all of a tremble, and I assure you, miss, can scarcely say a word.'

'Give me something to drink, Waller. My throat seems parched, and I can scarcely see. Do you really think Miss Monckton handsome?'

'The greatest of her enemies, miss, cannot deny her great beauty, and everyone admires her figure.'

'False, false girl that she is! And to blind me with her letter from that sailor. Ah, this has been a part of her perfidious plan!'

'Poor girl, miss, she cannot help being in love with the captain, he is so handsome; and when he talked to Miss Monckton yesterday, and she spoke of his honourable intention, his eyes were so lit up——'

At this confirmation of her worst suspicions, overpowered by her feelings, Rosa fell back in a swoon.

'Now is my time to call her up,' said Waller, as she ran downstairs. 'Oh dear, miss,' said the maid, as she bounced open the door, 'do go up to Miss Rosa; she has fainted dead away.' Susan heard no more, but instantly rushed upstairs; whilst Captain Cornish, as he was not summoned, continued his dinner.

Susan found the report true; Rosa had fainted away. She immediately took the pillow from under her head, and placed her flat upon her back; and then, sprinkling her forehead with cold water, soon restored her to animation. But when her returning sense assured her of the presence of Susan, she turned away with unaffected dislike, and calling Waller, begged Miss Monckton would go downstairs and continue her dinner.

'I have finished, my dear Rosa,' she said; 'do let me stay;—I cannot leave you thus;—let me wipe your forehead.'

'Do not touch me;—go, go!'

The hurried manner in which this was articulated convinced Susan that the fit had left her so weak that her senses wandered; and fearing it might be the prelude to something more serious, she desired Waller to bathe her temple with vinegar and water, whilst she communicated the intelligence to her mother.

Mrs. Talbot had schooled her mind well. Half her life had been a continued series of misfortunes. Her husband had been killed in a duel; her only son had been drowned in his passage to India; the last prop of the house was bending under the weight of disease, from which there was no hope of recovery. She had prepared herself to hear any tidings, for none could be worse than she anticipated. Fortune could not make her happiness; that was wrecked for ever; Death could not unnerve her; she was prepared for the intruder whenever he might come. She had been busily employed in one of her many generous acts. Conceiving that it would be a pleasure to her daughter at her last moments to make some remuneration beyond what was hers for the undeviating affection and attention of Susan, Mrs. Talbot had been engaged with her solicitor for the transfer of two thousand pounds into her daughter's name; and this gift, she meditated, would be left to Susan, whilst the rest of the property which did not go in that direction Mrs. Talbot knew would be given to Captain Cornish. The last-named gentleman was quite at his ease. He was making himself as comfortable as possible; and not hearing the report that his betrothed was deranged, he took care not to derange himself.

Susan followed Mrs. Talbot into the room; and the first words she heard were—'Do not, dear mother, let me be annoyed by that false girl,' the sudden change of all affection for her—she had long looked upon Susan as her best companion — without any apparent reason, convinced both the mother and Susan of the state of the invalid's mind.

Susan, yielding to the caprice, immediately retired; but she sat on the staircase, her face buried in her hands, and her eyes streaming with tears. She knew how surely her friend's days were numbered; and sincerely regretted that those days should be embittered by a disappointment too certain to occur, when her whole heart and soul should be upon holier and more comforting thoughts.

'There, she is gone, dearest,' said Mrs. Talbot, as she beckoned Waller to leave the room. 'Look at me, child; you know who *I* am, Rosa! Come, speak to your mother.'

Rosa's look was a strong indication of what passed in her mind. She half imagined her mother deranged for asking the question.

'Why, my dearest mamma, why do you ask if I know *you?*

'Because, my dear, you do not appear to recollect Susan.'

'I shall never forget her, to my last hour,' replied the daughter.

'I hope and trust not, my dearest girl; half the world might have been searched and her equal never found. Never was there a more amiable, religious, excellent girl.'

'Never was there a viler, more ungrateful hypocrite!' coolly answered the daughter.

The mother looked doubtingly at her daughter. 'I see, mother, what is passing in your mind; but I am neither mad nor foolish. I should have told you before, but that Cornish did not wish it.'

A flush of suspicion crimsoned the face of Mrs. Talbot; but it as quickly evaporated. She had no suspicion beyond a second, and she was ashamed even of that. 'Let me hear this marvellous story, Rosa. I will answer for it some designing creature has made this mischief—some whispering, tattling—'

'I beg your pardon, madam,' said Waller, suddenly entering. 'I never make mischief—nor am I a whispering, tattling—–'

'Leave the room, Waller,' said Mrs. Talbot, as she rose from the sofa; 'and when you have shut the door, see if you cannot sit at some distance from the keyhole. Now, Rosa, if you please, let me hear this secret. You are in no state of health to be flurried and annoyed by such romances. Waller, I should think, might find a better situation, where she will be kept at a greater distance.'

'It is easily told, mamma; and I am ashamed of not having at once informed you. You know ever since my childhood that I have loved Augustus. He has declared his love for me, and I have accepted him.' There was a palpable shudder which shook Mrs. Talbot's frame. She looked at her daughter with an eye of intense feeling; and yet not willing to shock her, begged her to continue her statement. 'Miss Monckton, mamma, availed herself of my situation—has secretly met him; and Waller overheard him make a proposal, which she, too, gladly accepted.'

'I beg your pardon, miss,' said Waller; 'I did not tell you exactly *that!*'

Mrs. Talbot rang the bell twice without heeding the intrusion. She desired the coach might be stopped which passed the gate that evening; ordered Miss Waller's *things* to be ready; paid her her wages, with a month's besides, packed her off from the vicinity of her daughter's room, and locked the outer door:—in five minutes the artful lady's-maid was no longer a servant in Mrs. Talbot's house. She, however, made as much mischief as she could. She rushed into the parlour, and informed Captain Cornish that Miss Rosa was quite aware of his perfidy; that Miss Rosa had mentioned the offer he had made to her; that the mother was determined the match should take place; and that she would mention what the captain had said to *her* to every servant of the establishment.

Augustus did not care one straw about all she had said, or could say. He poured out another glass of wine; told the intruder she might either talk on or walk out; and helping himself to a most inviting peach, set to work to demolish it. Not even the impertinence of Waller could withstand the undisguised contempt of the captain; and the maid retired, banging the door violently, and declaring herself the happiest creature in England, in thus escaping the society of a sickly mistress, and a disreputable upper-housemaid: an insult intended for Susan. Her flourish of tongues did no harm to any; Rosa's door was fortunately closed, and Mrs. Talbot, in the presence of her daughter, was hearing from Susan every word she either heard or uttered when in the society of Captain Augustus Cæsar Cornish.

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH OUR HERO WETS HIS FIRST COMMISSION, AND IS SHOWN WHAT FAVOUR AND AFFECTION MAY BE BESTOWED UPON THE SON OF A LORD AND THE SON OF A DOG-STEALER.

'WELL, I have no objection, sir, in such a cause, to drink another glass; and here's to his good health; and long may he live to enjoy it, and to step up the ladder as quickly as he has got his promotion. Mr. Bowling, here's your very good health. There's not a drop of water in it, sir—it's a raw nip. And I beg your pardon, sir, I ought to have said Lieutenant Bowling.'

'Well said, old Pipes!' rejoined one of the midshipmen; 'bring yourself to an anchor. You are not to be made drunk by a glass or two, any more than a Jamaica fly is to be killed by rum and sugar.'

'I am not so much afraid of being hazy with this stuff as I was of being swamped in the salt-water, when the *Pelican* was wrecked,' said Pipes. 'Lord love you, Mr. Bowling, how I envied you being the last man on board. I think the crack I got from the sea must have sent me half on shore before I had time to strike out; and when I landed, I had grown as round as a puncheon, and with as much water in my hold as there was in the craft before she split.'

'Take another nip, Pipes, and shake yourself—it will turn into grog, well mixed.'

'Well, young gentlemen,' said Pipes, 'there's an example before you, as the captain used to say when he punished a man;—there's Mr. Bowling a lieutenant, and he'll

live to be an admiral, if Yellow Jack don't catch him on shore, or John Shark afloat—that's what it is to serve with captains who watch every step of their officers. He's none of your short-hair and long-teeth gentlemen—king's hard bargains—who are always asleep and for ever getting the middle-watch fever—do as he has done, and when I am boatswain of Portsmouth Dockyard, some of you will be the Port-Admirals. All I can say is, Lieutenant Bowling, I'm sorry you are going to leave us.'

'Well, Pipes,' said Bowling, 'I'm sorry, although I'm glad that I am going to leave you—sorry, because we have all been some time together, and all wrecked together—here we are all drafted on board of another ship together—and friendship ever increases the more we are bound together in danger; but I'm glad I'm appointed to the *Creole*, because it is difficult for a promoted officer to do his duty rigidly in the same ship, and not give offence to some of his former messmates. Why, there's Pat Heavisides, if he was in my watch, he'd grow thin in a week; he can't keep his eyes open to take leave of his old shipmate. Stir him up, Pipes.'

Pipes took his call, and, placing it close to Heavisides' ear, blew a shrill note, which startled the heavy-headed slumberer.

'All hands wash decks, ahoy!' the boatswain bellowed; whilst another midshipman soused a basin of water in his face, and a third began to scrub his face with a rough towel. 'Sprinkle and scrub, my lads,' said Pipes, who held the poor devil's head as in a vice, whilst the first youngster continued to pour some more water over him, and the other one rubbed hard enough to remove the skin. 'There now,' he continued, 'here you are, clean for muster; your eyes washed like a turtle's, and your lips sweet enough for a lady to taste. Stir up, man, you'll never get rid of that weekly account on your collar. Nelson never spoke to you—and Collingwood never took you by the hand. There, say good-bye to Lieutenant Bowling before you lose sight of him for ever!—he'll be a post-captain whilst you are lugging that fat carcase of yours about the lower deck, seeing it holy-stoned.'

The *Creole* was about to put to sea; and Bowling wished to show himself no loiterer in his new situation. He shook his old messmates by the hand, wished them equal good fortune with himself; and was about to do the same to Heavisides, who he found had again put his face on the back of his hands, and, leaning on the table, had gone fast asleep.

'Good-bye, Heavisides,' he said; 'one of these days we shall meet again, when I shall have the captain's permission to sleep, and you'll keep your eyes open in a squally middle watch. Shake him by the ear, Pipes.'

Pipes gave him a pull of the lug, which would have lifted a sow from the ground.

'Take my blessing and my advice,' continued Bowling; 'keep awake whilst anything is to be obtained, and go to sleep when all the work is done.'

'Mr. Heavisides,' said a quarter-master, 'the first lieutenant wants you on deck directly. You are to take Lieutenant Bowling's chest and hammock on board the *Creole*.'

'It's devilish hard I am always to do the work when it's not my watch on deck,' grumbled the sleepy-headed fellow.

'That's all fair enough,' said Bowling. 'You sleep on your own watch, so of course you must be kept awake afterwards. Come, look sharp! I want to be off; and I'm not going like a marine drafted into a strange ship, and sitting on his chest; look sharp and be back again, and then you shall take me.'

'Soon on the stilts, you see,' growled Heavisides. 'Promotion makes us wonderfully proud; curse all such pride, say I.' Thus he continued as he slowly went through the steerage and mounted the companion.

'Bless you, Mr. Bowling,' said Pipes; 'you and I have had some rough weather together: we started in life somewhat the same. You have both forereached and weathered on me; but I don't look with a jealous eye; you deserve all you have got. But I do not think I could ever bring myself to pipe the side for that heavy-headed fellow, or for young Curlew, who is to pass to-morrow, and who has got his commission waiting for him at the admiral's office. That fellow has never done any one thing but steer the captain's boat, or pick flowers for the admiral's daughters; he hardly knows the stem from the stern, and has no more notion of seamanship than a Newfoundland dog has of making a silk veil.'

The young gentleman here alluded to was the Hon. William Curlew, the eldest son of Viscount Seagull. Seagull was an admiral; and his son was to rise as rapidly as the service would permit. He was now only sixteen; he was to pass the following day; and whatever questions might be asked, there was little fear of any examination as to the certificate of his age.

In those days passing went by favour; a youngster of no birth and less pretensions stood an awful chance of being sent back for six months; while such a hobble-de-hoy as Curlew was quite sure of success, and of advancement. The passing was to take place on board the *Creole*; and as the captain of that frigate was the senior officer, and Curlew was the only midshipman to be examined, the captain availed himself of the event to do two services at once—one in the way of a dinner-party, and the other as the

senior officer of the examination; and both events were to take place at the same time.

It was six o'clock when the captains and Curlew arrived on board the *Creole*. Curlew had some apprehensions which nothing could entirely eradicate; he knew his ignorance and inexperience, and had been stuffed by Pipes in the art of bending a top-sail;—the names even of the ropes used on such an occasion not being in his vocabulary. As to navigation, he was in that respect in the happiest state of ignorance: he might by some very great exertion have mastered both the taking of the altitude and the working of the latitude; but as to the longitude by chronometer, or by lunar observation, these were quite out of his reach, and subjects he had never studied or contemplated.

By some great oversight of the captain's, the new lieutenant, Mr. Bowling, was invited; for, on these occasions, it would have been as well if no ear overheard the examination. Bowling was the rough son of the service. Curlew was born in the lap of luxury; the path of existence was made smooth for him. Cakes and jams had accompanied him to sea; money was only asked for, and had; and promotion was the natural consequence of great parliamentary influence. His conversation was of lords; his dreams of ribbons and stars, earned without danger or difficulty. Exactly opposite to him at table sat Bowling; his eye quick and intelligent; his ear attentive whenever anything relative to the service was the subject, and coldly indifferent, when the conversation turned upon Lord Seagull and his mighty relatives.

The first part of the dinner, the soup and fish, having been despatched, and the meat and poultry having replaced them, the servants were sent out of the cabin, and the examination of the Hon. William Curlew began. And this examination was in order to ascertain if the said William Curlew was, in every respect, qualified to take charge of one of his Majesty's ships,—to navigate her through the pathless seas,—to extricate her from difficulties and dangers,—and to lead her into action against the foes of his country, with such seamanship and ability as would enable him to conduct himself and his ship with credit to the service. There is no examination which should be more rigid; the lives of hundreds are at the caprice of the captain; to him every man looks in the hour of danger; and from his eagle eye is courage imparted, when many might waver. Sometimes 'the impervious horrors of the leeward shore' are only to be averted by the most consummate seamanship; and when, far away from any land, disaster overtakes the ship—the furious gale and angry sea raging to destroy her—then is the talent of the seaman shown to the best advantage, and difficulties apparently insurmountable easily overcome.

'Pay attention, Mr. Curlew, to the question I am about to ask,' said the senior captain; 'and do not answer without due reflection.' Curlew turned as pale as ashes; he was quite certain that he could not have answered any question of navigation, even if it were only to navigate himself from the midshipmen's berth to the boatswain's storeroom, for he never had ventured into such holes as the fore cockpit. 'Now, sir,' continued the captain, with a very grave and officer-like countenance, 'have the goodness to answer this question:—"If a ham is placed before you at a captain's table, who has not more money than he can spend, and it is requisite to practise economy, how would you carve it?"'

'Ah!' ejaculated the second captain, who was very much in that predicament, and who thought he might pick up a little useful knowledge himself, 'Ah!—let us hear, Mr. Curlew.'

'I should,' replied Curlew, with a little assumption of knowledge—'I should cut the ham right through the middle.'

'Quite wrong—quite wrong,' interrupted the second captain, laying a great stress upon the repetition of the words. 'If that plan were pursued, the juice would escape from both sides, the ham would dry up sooner, and would become unpalatable, hard, and useless.'

'I am rather inclined to differ in opinion with you, Captain Skinner,' said the junior captain, who was a man of large fortune, and a particular favourite of the admirals. 'I have remarked that at the admiral's table the ham is always cut in the manner described by Mr. Curlew; and——'

'It should be cut, Captain Freightall,' interrupted Skinner, 'close to the knuckle, in such a manner as to occasion the smallest surface. I assure you I have tried it merely experimentally, and I can assure you, my dear Freightall'—here he gave a very intimate and confidential nod—'on this subject you may rely upon my experience.'

'I must say, sir,' said Curlew, 'that I am indebted to you for your suggestion. Perhaps I may be allowed to say, that I should cut it from the knuckle for economy, but through the middle as most savoury.'

'Bravo!' called out the captain of the *Creole*, 'answered most properly. Take a glass of wine, Curlew. Mr. Bowling, will you do me the favour to join us?'

'Have you any questions to ask Curlew?' said the senior captain, addressing Freightall.

'Yes,' said the young captain; 'I should like to know, if it was blowing hard at south-west, how he would run in and anchor in Plymouth Sound.'

'Oh, my dear Freightall, it would occupy an hour to answer all the details of bending cables, striking masts, soundings, and so on. Here, Curlew, my boy; let us have some practical knowledge. Let me see you carve

this fowl without withdrawing your fork once; and mind how you do it, as you will have to eat the legs devilled for breakfast to-morrow.'

When the question relative to Plymouth Sound was asked, Bowling, who had devoted his attention to his plate, raised his head. It was a question which involved local knowledge, and required some seamanship properly to answer; but when his captain changed the question, he saw at once that the passing was a mere farce, and that 'a smile would best become him.'

'Take a glass of champagne with me,' said Skinner, 'before you begin. Your health and promotion. Do you sail to-morrow, Freightall?'

'Why, yes; I believe I do,' said Freightall, with some indifference. 'There are some privateers lurking about Honduras, and I suppose I shall, as usual, be made to cruise there; but I shall lose the ball at Spanish Town, which is hard upon me.'

In the meantime Curlew was hacking the fowl; and the captain of the *Creole* was keeping up a hurried conversation about Lord Seagull, and in his influence soon procuring promotion; Captain Skinner had acted the part of a listener, and the *rôle* of a gourmand; no one looked at the lacerated piece of poultry, and the fork had been withdrawn a dozen times. The servants were rung for, the clerk was ordered to bring in the passing certificate; it was signed without any reluctance; Mr. Curlew was voted capable of taking charge of any ship, and his promotion was sure to follow immediately, as an Admiralty vacancy would occur in consequence of the invaliding of an officer, who was good enough to make a vacancy rather than run the chance of a court-martial, which might have made him minus his half-pay for ever.

There were many who had served long and meritoriously, who were anxiously watching the event. Many were reported as first on the Admiralty list; some, indeed, had received letters from their friends, assuring them that the First Lord had actually promised—and who could doubt the veracity of a First Lord?—others, again, looked, as it were, through a telescope reversed, and saw the object of their greatest hope diminished in size, and far off in the distance; but all had a chance, for all were passed who looked forward to the reward of the service. Bowling, perhaps, was the only indifferent person, as he had got his commission, and no one could overtop him. He saw by his captain's manner that Curlew had the best chance, and began to think that he might be asked to change ships in order to accommodate a man of Curlew's influence.

The medical department and the invaliding officers were in those times not overscrupulous. Mr. Buzzard was brought before them. He complained of all sorts of diseases; and was perfectly certain he should die if he remained. He had a violent dyspepsia, the everlasting complaint for invaliding. The medical man examined him, and was quite certain he was unfit for the service in these climates. The invaliding papers were signed; they were sent to receive the proper approval from the admiral's pen, and the next morning the Honourable William Curlew was appointed lieutenant in the room of John Buzzard, invalided.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH MASTER CUPID IS BEGINNING TO SHARPEN HIS ARROWS AND PREPARE HIS BOW.

ALTHOUGH Captain Collingwood and Captain Horatio Nelson had left the station, they both had left Bowling under the special protection of the admiral. He had likewise made the acquaintance of his late Majesty William the Fourth, and had received a promise from him of future support. Bowling was amongst officers, as amongst seamen, a universal favourite; and a circumstance soon occurred, which showed how British seamen followed an officer in whom they have the greatest confidence.

No sooner was Bowling fairly installed in his dignity as lieutenant of the *Creole*, had taken leave of his hammock for ever, and had made his bed in a cot, than his full heart seemed to overflow with satisfaction. He sat down in his cabin, and reflected on his past life, which flitted before him as a shadow; he thought how *she*, if she valued his existence, would rejoice in his advancement; and felt proud at having leaped barriers apparently insurmountable, and by his own exertions, backed by the quick eye of such men as Nelson and Collingwood, risen into notice and esteem. He resolved to write to the German doctor, and to his Susan, before the *Creole* sailed; and he had not much time to lose.

The packet had hove in sight, and her signal had been made as the sun went down. Buzzard was invalided to a moment. Had the mail arrived that night, which, luckily or not, the dying away of the sea-breeze prevented, even Curlew might have lost his promotion, as a young lord was sent out in her to fill the first vacancy. The *Creole* was allowed to wait the anchorage of the packet to receive her letters; and Bowling had passed one night as a lieutenant in all the glory of having charge of a watch. He never winked during those four hours; the time seemed too short for the summing up of his happiness. He gave the midshipman of his watch permission to turn in; and he preferred being left alone in his felicity rather than be observed by another.

The sea-breeze came down late and strong; and the *Creole* having lost the opportunity of going out of Port Royal with the land breeze, was allowed to remain a day longer at anchor.

Ever since Bowling had embarked in the collier he had not received a letter from any one. He was fourteen when he first cut out his own life; he was now past twenty; and often did he rebuke himself for the neglect of the doctor, to whom he was much indebted: once only he had written to Susan, and once to her mother, in both cases enclosing money, but he had received no answer. This made him think that he was neglected, or that his letter had miscarried. He never thought of the money, his mind was much too liberal for that; it had started in the right course, and if wrecked it was a matter of indifference to the possessor, had Susan not had some influence over it.

The letters for his former ship arrived: she was no more; but the crew existed. On looking over these eagerly sought and welcome sheets, there was one for Mr. Thomas Bowling of His Majesty's ship the *Pelican;* and Mr. Heavisides was sent with it to the *Creole*. The boat's crew seemed to partake of the heaviness of the officer, who was almost asleep under the awning, and who cared not how long they were in pulling from ship to ship, as he was seated, his face protected from the sun, and the sea-breeze blowing delightfully strong.

'Come, jump up, Heavisides,' said Bowling, who saw the sleepy fellow loitering alongside, 'there is your pendants with the recall flying from the guard-ship.' Heavisides had never seen that, but Bowling knew the signal well. 'Come, hand yourself up the side, you are as long getting under weigh as a Spanish line-of-battle ship.'

'It's only a letter for you, Bowling.'

'*Only* a letter for *me?* if I had known what it was, I would have swum for it; hand it here; away with you back again, and see if you can't keep your eyes open, and be more active in future.'

Bowling took the letter; he did not dare trust himself to look at the direction, lest he should be tempted to break through all discipline and read it on the quarter-deck. Two steps lodged him on the main-deck; two more, and he was in his cabin. It was a woman's hand; and the first word he saw was the pleasantest of the whole—Susan. Greedily his eyes devoured it, and thus it ran:

'There never was a letter written which was more warmly welcomed than yours from Jamaica, and never did a grateful heart more truly beat than mine in its reception. I valued your remembrance of me more than the enclosure, which I instantly forwarded to my mother, and for which, with the two shillings, you are my creditor. I will not deny to you that your letter awakened in me the warmest wish that we might meet again; that with my own eyes I might behold the lad I taught, grown into an officer and a man. That day, I hope, is not far distant; and until it arrives, I shall live in the hope of its consummation—then will I pour forth my gratitude with more words than you will hear with pleasure.'—('Dear little soul,' said Bowling to himself, 'if she was to spin a yarn as long as all my namesakes' placed together, she never would tire me of listening.')—'And then you shall be fully satisfied that I have remembered you, although you were far distant, and that the breeze has borne your name upon its wings. You will be delighted to hear that my mother continues in excellent health. My situation as companion to Miss Rosa Talbot has enabled me as yet to supply her wants; but this resource will soon, I fear, be cut off. This young and beautiful girl will soon be dead; indeed, each day's dawn seems the last she is destined to see. Still she clings to life, and still sees her health restored, and visions of earthly happiness within her reach. In this dreadful state, when the mind should only dwell on its hereafter, we cannot wean her from this life; and even at this moment, attenuated in form, a mere living skeleton, she has engaged herself in marriage, and urges her mother to the completion of the ceremony. I cannot write more on this subject; it pains me to think how we are all wedded to this world and its transitory enjoyments. May that God who has sheltered you from the storm, and shielded you from the enemy, watch over, keep, and preserve you: there is no night in which this is not repeated by me. Remember the instructions of your youth. Courage, boldness, enterprise, may merit promotion in this world; be it yours, by your conduct and virtue, to establish a well-grounded hope of an eternity of reward. Rest assured, that no earthly calamity can obliterate my remembrance of you, as no other person can inspire the gratitude which it will ever be my greatest pride to acknowledge. Therefore, if the knowledge that my prayers are ever for your welfare—your name ever on my lips—and your memory ever in my heart—be acceptable to you, receive the assurance with the acknowledgment that

'I am, ever affectionately, yours,
'SUSAN.

'P.S.—If my wishes could be realized, I should receive frequent letters from the West Indies.'

Bowling read the epistle twice—lovers always do that, or say they do; then he kissed it—that seems requisite; then he overhauled the seal—it was a leaf—'I only change in death,' the motto. There was no

mistake! Bowling was in love forthwith, and armed himself with desperate resolves the better to merit his former preceptress. 'Hang it,' said he (very improperly, no doubt), 'if I don't make myself a captain in a year, I'll swallow the fid of the main-topmast. Something must turn up—the *Creole* has ever been a lucky vessel—pirates and privateers are plentiful—the sooner we are at sea the better—but before we go, hurrah for an answer!'

'My dear Miss Monckton,' ('one never loses by civility,' thought Tom; 'it's as cold as a norther at Vera Cruz, but it's very respectful'), 'I have this instant received your letter, without any date or any departure, so that I am adrift how to shape the course of my answer. I never was so happy in all my life. All the prizes that once carried the flag of an enemy, and were hauled down by the British sailor, never gave half the pleasure to the captors as your dear letter did to me. You are the prize I seek; although it will somehow be reversed, for I have already struck *my* colours to the fire of your eyes. Lord love you for the seal! Keep true to your motto, as the trade wind to tropical climates; and when you do die, if I live to step up the ladder, you shall die like a dolphin—a gold colour! I'll soon send your mother as many doubloons as will buy the state carriage of the king, and pay more taxes than the prime minister votes for in a year! I see your dear face in every cloud. I hear your sweet voice in every breeze; and in the midnight watch, your fancied presence keeps me ever awake and lively. I shall write to you again soon—I think I am speaking to you now. So believe me—ay, from stem to stern, from the keel to the upper deck, in calm, in breeze, and in storm—the vessel you may command until the timbers rot, and the hull is dismantled.

'TOM BOWLING.

'N.B.—I see you put P.S. I'm made a lieutenant, and am now Lieutenant Bowling, of his Majesty's ship *Creole*, at your service. I was so taken up with you in the first start of my letter, that I never thought of myself. We are off on a cruise directly, so pray excuse the scrawl. My best love to your mother. Do tell the doctor I'm alive, and can sing a good song, all about you; but I can't play an overture as he does yet.'

Now came the difficulty. Tom was resolved to send a seal which should be a clincher, and say more than he dared to write. He rummaged every part of his property, but he could find nothing to suit him. He found one old *seal* with a sunflower; but Tom was not aware of the fabulous properties ascribed to that gaudy plant, and he could not twist the sun into anything applicable to present circumstances. Then he got hold of another, which was a violet peeping out from under its natural covering, and meant as emblematic of modesty, with a motto, '*Fleur sans ambition je me cache.*' That was quite enough for Tom; he threw the seal overboard, and was angry with himself for having kept anything French about him. 'I've got it,' said he. 'An anchor is the emblem of hope. I should like to stamp the letter with the print of the best bower, but that's too large, and so is the sheet-anchor. *That* would suit me best,' thought Tom, 'but an anchor's the thing, and a purser's anchor's the best. Here's two of them, with a cable, that's meant for affection, twisted round them, and with two anchors and cables he's not likely to part.' Pleased with the idea, Tom borrowed the purser's coat, and with one of the buttons stamped the seal of his letter. 'She'll understand it,' said he. 'Leave a girl who's in love alone for making a sentiment out of a bread-bag, and she'll turn it somehow or other until she makes it answer her wishes. And now only let me get athwart hawse of a Frenchman, and if I don't make such a figure that my name shall remain in the despatch or my carcass feed the sharks, my name is not Tom Bowling—and to be sure I have some doubts of that, so I withdraw it, and add—there are no snakes in Virginia.'

'The letter bag is going to be closed directly, sir,' said a midshipman, who tapped at his door. Bowling gave the letter a kiss, in the fond hope that Susan might kiss the same place: then handing his despatch to the midshipman, to be given to the captain's clerk, he went on deck to hear the news.

Scarcely had he got on deck before he saw the Honourable Charles Curlew coming alongside, in a lieutenant's uniform, steering the captain's gig, which he managed so admirably that she shot right under the fore channels with her bow under the anchor. When with a stern boat-hook the gig was hauled aft to the gangway, and Mr. Curlew stepped on board, it was evident his lofty blood was not circulated in plebeian veins. His memory was very dull, and he did not recognise the man with whom he had dined the day before. He begged to see the captain, and was forthwith ushered into his cabin. Bowling looked at him with all the honest indignation of a real British seaman. 'I can fathom his heart,' he said to himself. 'He thinks he will pass me in the service; and whilst I am drudging out life as a first-lieutenant, he will be lolling on the sofa in the captain's cabin, giving his orders to exercise the men whilst he is slumbering in inactivity. But if he passes me, and I have an opportunity of distinguishing myself, I am mistaken.' As Bowling was pondering these things in his mind, and looking at that low, miserable place, Port Royal, the sentinel from the cabin-door informed him that the captain wished to speak to him. Bowling compre-

hended at once the case, and made up his mind before he went down the companion.

'Sit down, Mr. Bowling,' said the captain. Mr. Curlew managed to bend one joint in his aristocratic neck, in return for the acknowledgment the open-hearted Bowling made of recognition.

'The fact, Mr. Bowling, is this,' said his captain, 'and the shorter we cut these matters the better. The admiral wishes Mr. Curlew to join my ship; Mr. Curlew wishes it himself; I wish it, so of course you have no objection.'

The *Creole* was a frigate; the vessel into which Bowling was to exchange was a gun-brig. Curlew knew that his next step was sure, and that he was very ill calculated to command a vessel. Besides which, gun-brigs are proverbially dangerous, are employed, generally speaking, in minor affairs, carry letters, bring despatches, run to St. Jago de Cuba for wine, or are bundled down to the Havannah for cigars. Then in the navy a gun-brig is thought a very inferior affair, both as to size and respectability, whilst a frigate is the principal object of every seaman's heart. Even the captain feels himself shelved when exchanged into a line of battle-ship, as his hope of prize-money (although there are many instances to the contrary) dwindles into despair. Bowling knew well how dangerous it was in those times for a young man without interest to combat the wishes of his captain; and feeling that it was better in this instance to make a virtue of necessity, he at once said, 'I have no objection to make, sir. I should have been proud to have served under you, and to have merited your praise, as I have already merited and obtained that of Captain Nelson and Captain Collingwood; but since the admiral wishes it, and you request it——'

'Stop, Mr. Bowling; I do not request; I wish it.'

'The terms in my mind, sir,' said Bowling, with a little quickness, 'are the same, and I assent to it.'

'I will arrange the affair in a moment, Mr. Bowling,' said Curlew. 'I believe the gig is alongside; the order will be on board in less than a quarter of an hour; it is, I believe, already signed; and by sunset, sir, I hope to have joined——'

'You had better dine here, Curlew.'

'Thank you, sir, I am engaged to dine with the Admiral. Good morning, Mr. Bowling.' Mr. Curlew jumped down the side, and Bowling as quickly descended to his cabin. It required very little time to prepare himself for the change, and he felt some pride in having a command, however insignificant it might appear. 'Give me only a chance,' he said to himself, 'one hour of the flood-tide of opportunity, and I'll cut out my own path in the service, or I'll make Jack Shark a present of my carcass.'

CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH OUR HERO BECOMES A REAL HERO, AND IS NOT TO BE CONFOUNDED WITH HERO AND LEANDER.

'THAT's the way of the world,' said Bowling, 'the crowd are elbowed to make way for peers; and thousands are sacrificed that one may be great, I have lost by the exchange, for a young lieutenant is better placed under the protection of a powerful captain than under chance and his own exertions; but here am I, captain of his Majesty's sloop *Zebra*—captain to all intents and purposes; and now is my time to do my utmost.'

The following morning the *Creole* and the *Zebra* weighed at daylight, and went out of Port Royal with the land breeze. Bowling surveyed through his glass the well-set sails of the frigate, the neatness of her rigging, and her clean man-of-war-like appearance. The *Zebra* was very dingy outside, and very much in want of paint inside. The crew had been accustomed to the free-and-easy system; and in those days a ten-gun brig, commanded by a lieutenant, was nothing more or less than a kind of tender to the admiral's ship. But Bowling had served under one of the most careful men in the navy; and in after years, husbanding the stores of the ship became the object of Captain Collingwood's greatest attention. There is an anecdote told of that captain, that during the hottest of the fire at the battle of St. Vincent, Collingwood, who commanded the *Excellent*, observed the new fore-topsail, which he had bent only the day before the action, almost cut to pieces by the shot.

'Dear me,' he said to the boatswain, 'how very annoying! They will quite spoil that sail, I declare; we ought to have bent an old one before we began to engage.' Serving under a man like that makes an officer. The *Zebra* was ordered off to Barbadoes with despatches; and directly the sea breeze came down, she made the best of her way to her destination. The *Creole* parted company, and ran down to the westward. Every hour of every day was turned to advantage by Bowling. Before he had got a hundred miles from Jamaica, no one would have recognised the *Zebra*. An active captain makes a vigilant crew. At last, having toiled up against the trade-winds, the *Zebra*, on the 5th of February, 1794, made the island of Martinique at daylight, in the morning. Bowling was first awakened to all the consciousness of his responsibility when he was informed that there were several strange sail in sight, all of which appeared to be men-of-war. He was instantly on deck. The fleet were not distant more than six miles, and were soon made out to consist of a three-

decker, four line-of-battle-ships, eight frigates, and six vessels of a smaller class.

The *Zebra* sailed as well as those naval coffins, ten-gun brigs, can be expected to sail. The breeze was light, and that was an advantage. Day had scarcely dawned before one of the frigates had her skysails set, and was standing towards the *Zebra* in chase.

'These cannot be Frenchmen,' said Bowling to one of his midshipmen—he had but two—one about forty, and the other about twenty-five years of age. 'They look much too smart aloft: their masts do not rake enough, and the sails are too well set. Well, at any rate, the frigate has paid us the same compliment, for there is the signal to show our number.'

The *Zebra* answered the signal, when the recall flag was hoisted, and she joined the fleet under the command of Sir John Jervis, who, with his ships, having on board about seven thousand troops under the command of Sir Charles Grey, was intent on the reduction of Martinique.

As small vessels were of the greatest service, and the despatches of very little consequence, the *Zebra* was kept under the admiral's orders. There were only two French vessels of war in the ports of the island. The *Bienvenue*, a frigate of thirty-two guns, was at Fort Royal, and an eighteen-gun corvette was at St. Pierre.

For the purpose of dividing the force of the enemy, the British troops landed at three different points considerably distant from each other. The plan had been ably drawn out, and British officers of high spirit and undaunted courage led on the divisions. They bore down all opposition; victory after victory was the result of high discipline and able tacticians; and by the sixteenth of the month, the whole island, with the exception of the Forts Royal and Bourbon, surrendered to the English. In this affair, so hastily dismissed, the seamen were not unemployed. They were landed in great numbers, and dragged cannon and mortars up heights considered inaccessible, and which seemed to defy all exertions. Neither were they tame spectators of the storming the very important post of Monte Catharine. To those hardy sons of the ocean nothing seemed impracticable: they cut roads through thick woods, they made passages across rivers, they filled up the shallow parts with stones, and covered them with branches of trees; they levelled banks by removing vast fragments of rocks, and with undaunted spirit succeeded in placing howitzers and mortars on the summit of a hill so steep that a loaded mule could not walk up in a direct ascent.

The French troops and seamen beheld with wonder and astonishment the completion of a work never contemplated by them. They saw the commanding heights bristling with cannon, and perceived the destructive shell, fired with unerring precision, bursting over their heads. It was at this moment, when the first discovery almost paralyzed the exertions of the enemy, that Bowling,* with the boats of the squadron, made a dash at the frigate; he pushed bravely into the Carénage. It was noonday, and no concealment could be resorted to. The enemy lay chain-moored within fifty yards of the shore; the walls of Fort Louis were covered with troops; the officers cheered on their men, and pointed to the coming boats as bringing only a cargo of carcasses to rot in the water. The broadside of the frigate was opened; the grape, canister, and langrage whistled over the heads of the brave fellows, who, undismayed at the shower which fell around, pushed fearlessly and gallantly forward. Every soldier on the walls was urged to deliberation and coolness; the men on board the frigate fired with steadiness and dexterity; the boarding pikes seemed to grow from her sides; the soldiers appeared animated with more than national vanity to defend the ship; and the roar of the guns and the cheers of the men resounded to the hills. Steadily and undauntedly, without wavering from their course, the gallant seamen, in the face of this fire, approached the frigate. Bowling's voice was heard cheering them onwards to the undertaking. If courage had been wanting, his bold front and daring manner would have inspired the most timid. He waved his hat; he gave the cheers; he was first of the foremost; and as he coolly remarked, that at their approach the fire of the frigate became less and less destructive, he called out, 'Now, now, my lads—success to the first on board!'

There was no lack of strength in the different boats; each seaman, catching the enthusiasm of his officer, bent his back to the oar as he answered the cheer. The sea seemed alive from their exertions; and in spite of all the fire of the Fort, the blazing of the frigate, and the tumultuous voices which seemed to come from thousands of the enemy, the boats dashed alongside. The wonder-stricken enemy crouched when they saw what danger had been overcome; a panic reigned where confidence had previously existed; and after a resistance which was only the dying embers of former courage, the frigate was boarded and carried.

The crew availed themselves of their vicinity to the shore to escape by swimming; and Bowling, finding the fire of the fort too warm for security—the frigate not having her sails bent, and it being impossible to send men aloft, exposed to the tremendous fire of musketry—placed his men in the boats, and taking his prisoners with him, returned to the ships. His success was the signal for another

* The name of the gallant officer who commanded the boats on this occasion was Lieutenant Richard Bowen, of the *Boyne*, the admiral's ship.

attack upon the town of Fort Royal. A number of scaling ladders, made of long bamboos, tied together by stout lines, were soon ready. The *Asia*, a sixty-four, and the *Zebra*,* were ordered to be in readiness to enter the Carénage for the purpose of battering the lower and exposed parts of Fort Louis, and to cover the boats intended to land a vast number of men to aid in the assault, whilst a detachment of the army, advancing with field pieces, would draw or divide the attention of the assailed.

The 20th was the day fixed for the attack, and the *Asia* and *Zebra* weighed to perform their allotted duty. The *Asia* had a Monsieur de Tourelles, the former lieutenant of the port, acting in the voluntary situation of pilot; but no sooner did she approach the Carénage, than the pilot wavered; he refused openly to take charge of the ship, giving as his reason that he was insufficiently informed of the situations of the shoals; but much more probably he relinquished his charge from the real dread of what he might reasonably expect from his perfidy, had the assault failed, and one of the many chances of war thrown him into the hands of his old companion and governor of the French forces, General Rochambeau.

Bowling, who followed as close as prudence could dictate in the wake of the *Asia*, perceiving her baffled in her attempts, disregarded the danger of the shoals, and, without waiting for orders, stood in unprotected into the anchorage. Then was the moment seized by the French to devote the sloop to destruction; and every gun which could be brought to bear, poured forth its contents at the *Zebra;* they had no other mark for a target. The *Asia* was too large a ship to venture without a pilot; but the *Zebra*, with a careful leadsman, cleared the tails of the shoals; and Bowling, taking an exposed position, and apparently ignorant of any danger, piloted the sloop in. In vain the enemy continued to pour at him their masses of round and grape; Fortune, they say, favours the brave; the sails still performed their duty, though perforated with balls; the *Zebra* dashed singly on, and Bowling, in spite of all opposition, ran the vessel close to the walls of the fort.† Captain Bowling‡ now leapt overboard at the head of his sloop's company, and assailed and took this important post before the boats could get on shore, although rowed with all the force and animation which characterize English seamen in the face of an enemy.

It is now many years since this daring, this chivalrous success was achieved; and many, many of the brave fellows who assisted our gallant hero in his unexampled exploit are gathered to their fathers. The long peace, which has nearly obliterated the remembrance of the many gallant services of the navy, has seen most of the officers employed in the expedition against Martinique in their graves. Day after day blots out from the list of life men who have fought and bled for their country, and who are forgotten by the rising generation. The navy—England's hope and firmest stay, rots gradually in the Medway and the Plym; her hardy veterans linger out the last remains of life in Greenwich, or a poor-house; the works of the historian become vapid and uninteresting; and naval novels are made the vehicles of knowledge, and are the last embers of history raked together to keep the navy before the eyes of the public: thus is Tom Bowling's career made to embody the services of many of the greatest men our navy has produced.

Sir John Jervis was always known as a man who duly estimated the services of an officer—he could not but see the great gallantry of the action; but he was not slow to perceive its rashness. It is said, 'success justifies the means;' but if the success of one act of temerity induces others to seek equally perilous undertakings, the list of killed and wounded would be fearfully increased, and every man whose promotion was slow would attempt a desperate act, and in all probability fail, to the great prejudice of the service. Bowling's success had the greatest effect upon the French general; and, at his request, commissioners were appointed to discuss the terms of surrender, which shortly afterwards took place.

Bowling felt himself a rising and a lucky man. The desperate service he had accomplished he knew would be passed from mouth to mouth, and that for the future his name would be known. It was eight o'clock on the morning of the twenty-second that Bowling sat at breakfast with his senior midshipman. The island had afforded a few nautical luxuries; and soft bread, fruit, and other delicacies in a ten-gun brig, covered the table.

'I think, sir, it is strange that the admiral has not ordered us to proceed to Barbadoes,' remarked the mid; he was old enough to hazard a thought, even in the presence of his commander.

'I expect the order every minute; the fleet will sail to-morrow, or next day; everything is arranged, and the island ours; and of all the islands which dot these seas, there is none so lovely, none so useful, as Martinique. If I were Prime Minister, England should never part with it again.'

'When the peace comes, sir, it will be given back, and then we shall have to take it again next war. For my part, if I were not professional, I should wonder what could be the use of war. We make war, man fleets,

* Captain Faulkner commanded the *Zebra*, Bowling being merely the personification of these gallant officers.

† James's 'Naval History.'

‡ Sir John Jervis's despatch.

collect armies, fight like devils—cut every man's throat because he is of a different nation—take islands, forts, and settlements—sacrifice the lives of millions, and then come negotiations for peace; and every place we have taken is given back again. It appears odd, that men with heads on their shoulders should consent to have them lopped off at this game of war, merely that the caprice of an emperor, or the folly of a king, should be gratified. I don't know how many wars I have not seen, or how many times I have been shot at, and poked at; and here I am, at forty-five, "a young gentleman,"* with a weekly account on the collar of my coat.'

'I'm all for war,' said Bowling. 'I hate a Frenchman—that frog-eating, monkey-looking people, are my detestation. I would make war for the value of a looking-glass, and——'

'The admiral has the signal up, sir, for you,' interrupted the other young gentleman.

'The devil he has?' was the reply. 'Steward, my coat, cocked hat, and sword. Man the boat—look sharp;—never mind me; finish your breakfast.' And in a moment, Bowling was on deck, down the side, and on board the *Boyne*. He was met at the gangway by a lieutenant, who conducted him to Captain Grey, and Captain Grey announced him to the admiral.

'Sit down, Mr. Bowling,' began Sir John Jervis; 'I have been so occupied that I have not had time to express my high opinion of the service you have performed. You are but of a few months' standing as a lieutenant; but I shall take care to ensure your promotion. Bear well in mind, however, that your temerity might have sacrificed many a man, and that your success is as much a miracle as your preservation. Here is your appointment as acting commander of the *Echo*. You will sail directly under sealed orders. You may consider yourself as confirmed in your rank; and with this I give you the assurance that I shall never lose sight of you. Good morning, Captain Bowling.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE BRAVE ASCEND THE LADDER OF ASSAULT, AND EACH STEP LEADS TO PROMOTION.

BOWLING flew up the hatchway. Captain Grey congratulated him warmly. He was down the side; and a very few minutes saw him on board the *Zebra*. The young gentleman, who was quite sure his commander had been sent for to receive his sailing orders, had got the messenger passed, and all ready for weighing. At the sight of the midshipman Bowling suddenly felt that he had been remiss in his duty—that the intoxication of pleasure at the announcement of his promotion had made him guilty of a certain remissness, if not injustice. He immediately returned to the flag-ship, and requested to see the admiral.

Sir John was much occupied, but desired Captain Bowling might be sent to him. Bowling was no hand at a speech; and as he began to stammer something about gratitude, Sir John cut him unceremoniously short.

'If, Captain Bowling, you have returned here to make a speech about gratitude, you might have saved yourself the trouble. I have promoted you because you have done a desperate service, which has been crowned with success. You may rely upon this, that had you not merited, I should not have promoted you.'

Bowling, when the admiral came to his full stop, mustered up a little courage. He would much sooner have faced a battery than have spoken to the admiral; but he felt he had a duty to perform, and thus he commenced his task.

'I have returned, Sir John, to ask your pardon for having, to a certain extent, omitted to do a duty to others. I was so overjoyed at your notice of my conduct, that I forgot on that occasion I was not alone. The senior midshipman of the *Zebra*, who is forty-five years of age' (here Sir John started,) 'swam by my side, his cutlass in his mouth, and was the first on the rampart. I feel satisfied you will pardon me this intrusion, since it was my duty, as well as my greatest desire, to bring this long-neglected and deserving officer to your notice.'

'I should have thought as badly of you, Captain Bowling, as before I thought highly, had you omitted this most essential branch of your duty; at the same time I beg to inform you, that when great services are performed, my eye is on every one. I inquired at the time who assisted you; and as I can see that you will be gratified in doing a kind act, take this commission. You will see it is already signed; and in your assistant in that gallant affair you will find your successor to the command of the *Zebra*. You have no time to lose; you will sail at daylight to-morrow, in company with the *Zebra*, for a few miles, and as you have much to do, I shall not perhaps see you again.' Sir John Jervis gave his hand, and as he warmly pressed it, said, 'I shall not forget or lose sight of you.'

With a light heart and cheerful countenance Bowling returned to the *Zebra*.

'Are we to weigh, sir?' said the midshipman.

'No, sir,' said Bowling, rather sharply; 'turn the hands up, and send everybody aft; we must set the business to rights directly.'

* Midshipmen, although as old as the hills, with their heads as snow-covered as the Andes, are called 'young gentlemen!'

And here he turned round, leaving his gallant successor in considerable uneasiness, as he imagined something had been done amiss for which he should incur some displeasure.

'The men are all aft, sir,' said the young gentleman.

'My men,' said Bowling; 'I am sorry to tell you that I am about to leave you; for a more gallant set of fellows never stepped a deck. And if I were to lead a party to storm the gates of Paris, I should like to have the volunteers from this craft. We have not been together two months, and in that time I have seen as much of you as if we had served together for years. The admiral has removed me from this vessel, and I must change my ship to-night. As you have acted since I have been on board, so let me advise you to continue under my successor. He is a brave and gallant officer, and will never disgrace the crew of the *Zebra*. You will pay attention to this paper I am about to read, as I have no doubt it will give you all satisfaction to hear.'

Bowling then stood upon a carronade slide, and read out the *young gentleman's* commission, making him a lieutenant, and appointing him to the *Zebra;* but as no name is mentioned on such a document, the ship's company and the gentleman himself were kept in the dark until the very end, when Bowling concluded thus:—'Signed, John Jervis, vice-admiral. To Mr. Robert Watson, midshipman of the *Zebra*, hereby promoted to the rank of lieutenant, and appointed to the command of his majesty's sloop, the *Zebra;* vice Bowling, promoted to the command of the *Echo*.'

Never were three lustier cheers heard than followed the announcement. The tears came into old Watson's eyes, and Bowling gave an audible sniffle; and it was on this occasion that Captain Bowling ventured upon a glass of grog to the success of his shipmate, who had so gallantly seconded him. As Bowling was now to wear an epaulette on the left shoulder, and was for the future to discontinue the blue coat edged with white, he made Lieutenant Watson a present of his garment. Watson was determined not to run the risk of bad luck by any deviation from old rules and customs. He ordered the pendant to be hauled down, and, coming on deck in his new uniform, desired it to be hoisted again as his pendant. Captain Bowling asked permission to give Watson a luncheon in the cabin of the latter, he being no longer the commander; and although it was only noon, and the sun scorching hot, a slight jollification took place. Bowling sent on shore for a small cask of *vin ordinaire*, which would, when shared out to the crew, give them some satisfaction, and in all probability act as a preservation against fever. There was nothing likely to be done which could cause annoyance. Everything looked prosperous. One or two of the petty officers who had been foremost in the attack were made gunners and boatswains; and the only dejected countenance on board, and he was much too generous to damp the general enthusiasm, was that of the other midshipman, who, with heart as noble and courage as high, had been debarred the chance of promotion by being left in charge of the sloop when the rest swam on shore. However, he had got a step, for he was now chief mate.

'Now,' says Watson, 'all the drudgery of life is over. I have carried the pedlar's pack of a midshipman's life for twenty-five years, and I have been passed fifteen years. I always thought that every man who came into the *Zebra* would try to get rid of me, and leave me to starve on shore; for a midshipman's half-pay is not easily reckoned. Now I'll get married. I'll try to pick up a little prize money to fit out my bride, and then I cast anchor on shore never again to get under weigh.'

'Well said, Watson,' replied Bowling; 'I think there is not a man in the service who would begrudge us a slight jollification upon our advancements. We'll have our dinner together at six o'clock; I'll pay the piper. But I must go and take command of the *Echo*, and then shift my traps; after that, and all the work done—for there may be lots to do yet—I'll return here, and we'll spend the evening like men who have reason to rejoice, and like officers who should set an example.'

Captain Bowling was received on board the *Echo* with three cheers. His gallant conduct had long since been heralded through the fleet. His predecessor had died of the fever; and this comfortable shipmate had made himself very familiar with some more of the crew. Bowling saw at a glance that great care and good discipline were requisite. Before the *Echo* sailed, the water had to be completed, provisions were required, and the rigging must be set up. He became the captain directly he read his commission; and the officers saw in the gallant fellow who had swum on shore and scaled a fortress, a careful and an active seaman.

He was to sail with sealed orders, to be opened on the Equator, in the longitude of fifty; and one of the line-of-battle ships was ordered to supply his ship with provisions. Bowling felt that the oftener he changed his vessel, the less remembrance there was of his former life. And in the *Echo*, just from England, not a soul had the slightest idea of his having served before the mast. This kind of news flies rapidly, and Bowling, to avoid its being spread from the *Zebra*, particularly desired that none of the men should be allowed to come on board, assigning for a reason his fear of the contagion of the yellow fever.

He visited his cabin; the difference was striking. Instead of having passed from old lieutenant to old lieutenant, each endeavour-

ing to save a dollar, the cabin of the *Echo* had been fitted out by a young nobleman. There were provisions and wines of the choicest selection, with a respectable servant. A strict account had been taken of all these things. Bowling at once took everything that was left, and found himself just as comfortably situated as the captain of the *Creole*, who had so very unexpectedly caused his promotion. It was at this thought that a flush of pride passed over his face.

'Another chance,' said he, 'and the Honourable Charles Curlew will be my junior officer, in spite of his high-flown birth, his ministerial interest, his carving fowls and his judgment of wine. Once posted, then hurrah for Susan. But I will deserve her yet. I feel myself well in the saddle. Neither Nelson nor Collingwood will forget me; and Jervis has promised not to lose sight of me.' Then he suddenly commenced—'"Oh, Susan, Susan, lovely dear"'—one of the finest songs that ever was penned by a poet. 'I must write to her,' he added, as he placed his writing materials before him.

'Why I dare do it, I hardly know,' he began; 'but I do it even at the risk of your displeasure. I call you dearest Susan;—ah! how often, how very often does the name murmur from my lips. This letter conveys to you news which I know will be acceptable. I am a captain. The poor boy, taken from the grave-side of his reputed father by your honoured parent, fed, housed, educated, cleansed in mind and body, has risen to be a captain in the navy. Now, Susan, the winds may howl, the seas run mountains high, thousands of miles may separate us, but nothing but death shall stop my gratitude, and even then I will show you, in my last hour, that of all the world you were the only woman I adored. My heart's too full to write; but my vanity makes me wish that you could see me with an epaulette on my shoulder, walking, with a full impression of the importance of my command, on the deck of the *Echo*. I dare say my old valued friend, the German doctor, will rejoice at my advancement, and I shall write to him shortly. I sail to-morrow, but where I cannot tell. Be assured, however, I will not lose an opportunity of praying you never to forget your faithful sailor, and of giving you every tidings of my prospects, my hopes, and my destination. God bless you, Susan! God bless you!'

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN HOW DIFFICULT A TASK IT IS TO PERSUADE A PERSON TO DIE WITHOUT BEING MARRIED.

'DID I ever, dearest Rosa, thwart you in one of your wishes, when those wishes were tempered by prudence and discretion? And now, what do I ask of you but that which your own good sense must approve? I would not shock you by an appeal to your long sufferings; but let me entreat you to relinquish all thoughts of marriage, and turn your attention to that awful moment which, sooner or later, we must all meet.'

'Why, my dearest mother, for ever talk of death? I know we cannot escape it; but why should I be pointed out as if death was in the chamber?' A fearful shudder passed over Susan, who was sitting at the foot of the sofa, whilst the mother sat by the side of the invalid, holding her hand. 'I feel no pain; I cough but a little; and if when I endeavour to rise I feel giddy, it is only from my long sickness now leaving me. By December I shall be well; and Susan and myself will ride in the fresh air, and our cheeks will then look as ruddy as the rose.'

'Will nothing, my dear child, wean you from the thoughts of this world? Must I show you this arm, now so thin that the pulsation of the artery can be *seen*? Must I, in performance of the duty I owe to my God—to you—to myself, hold up the mirror before those bright eyes, and show you the sunken cheek and the hectic flush of consumption?'

'Of what! my dear mother?' said the affrighted girl. 'Of consumption? Oh, it cannot be. Where are the symptoms which mark that dreadful complaint? Not an hour since, Augustus rallied me on the beauty of my complexion, and my certain return to health and strength. Where are the symptoms, Susan? You know I eat with the appetite of health.'

'Alas! my child,' said Mrs. Talbot, whose firmness of mind never deserted her, 'alas! in the very questions you have put may your answers be found. It is useless now to attempt to ward off the danger. The worst is told. Let me turn your heart to other objects than marriage. You would at this last moment repay back all my acknowledged kindness and attention by allowing us to lift your mind to a more exalted kingdom than this world can give.'

The solemn manner in which Mrs. Talbot expressed herself had a wonderful effect upon Rosa; and when, at the conclusion of the above remark, the mother overcame the woman, and she burst into tears, Susan could no longer restrain herself, and the invalid became fearfully agitated. For some time they remained in total silence, Mrs. Talbot resting with her eyes fixed on her daughter with an expression of the most acute grief.

'Your mind, dearest Rosa, has not been prepared for receiving the impressions your dangerous state requires, and it is from those who are accustomed to administer relief that you must seek and obtain the consola-

tion you require. Your physician more than a month since hinted to you your situation, but so delicately that you seem to have misunderstood him. I have schooled myself to bear that calamity with which it has pleased God to threaten me. Now let me instil into your mind fortitude and resignation. I have solicited my old and valued friend, our clergyman, to attend upon you almost directly, and when he leaves you, that good, kind, constant girl, who has watched over you with sisterly affection, will pray with you that we may all look with pious cheerfulness upon the separation about to ensue.'

It is difficult to describe the whirlwind which seemed to blow about the thoughts of the invalid. Although fearfully alive to her situation, since the hated word had been pronounced, she could not feel the danger others, and amongst those her own mother, had pronounced. Her very eager desire for food seemed to buoy her up with hope; and in that very hope was marked the strongest symptom of her disease. Her confidence as to her recovery still lingered on her mind, and she could not but think the next spring would revive her. Then came the thought of her lover, now wisely excluded by the mother.

A circumstance similar, in many respects, happened but a very few years ago. A most beautiful girl, only eighteen years of age, was seized by this unrelenting malady. Gradually her strength was sapped away; the cough came on; the most weakening perspirations saturated her bed; the appetite grew voracious, and death approached. Within three days of her death, so strongly was the conviction on her mind, in spite of every communication to the contrary, that she would recover, that after her parent had knelt by her side and offered up her heartfelt prayer, the daughter, discrediting even her anguish, said, 'Oh, do not despond; I feel quite confident that next spring I shall be as well as ever, and in your opera-box.' She died within four and twenty hours of that speech.

There are a vast number of men who have steeled their minds to meet death without apprehension; and in the tumult of the battle, when cheered on by their comrades in the excitement of victory, those men have met him with unblanched cheek and unquivering lips. But when sickness weakens the mind; when each morning only too plainly heralds the destroyer; when the physician hints, and the clergyman is summoned; he must indeed have lived a life of conscious rectitude who can hear the prayer read for the sick and not feel some apprehension.

In the lingering of consumption, when the mind retains its powers, and the wretched victim cannot imagine itself on the verge of the grave, the scene becomes more trying than in those cases where hope has lingered into despondency, and the elasticity of the mind is so lost that death or life appear indifferent.

Rosa's hectic flush forsook her as the clergyman entered. The mother and Susan were on their knees; and for the first time some misgiving seems to have taken possession of the invalid, for she trembled like a leaf. In a low, but deep and steady voice the clergyman performed his solemn duty, and then became the friend and the monitor. He had been prepared for this unwelcome task by Mrs. Talbot, who urged him to purge her daughter's mind from the worldly thoughts which still held it in possession. He fancied he had succeeded, but soon discovered his mistake when the poor creature, clinging still with woman's affection to the object of her heart, made the extraordinary request that she might be married before she died, urging as an argument, that from the age of fifteen she had cherished the thought of being her cousin's wife, and it was the gratification of a last worldly wish, innocent and requisite, as she had pledged herself to the union, and had strength enough to repeat her vows.

Quite in vain was every argument used as to the impropriety of such a request at such an awful moment. Her mind was bent upon it. It was her first, her last, her only request. The world and its pleasures might have ceased, but her constancy should never waver. Her lover was true to his word, the priest was already in the room, and every attempt to dissuade her had not the slightest effect.

Susan, although much shocked at her companion's determination, generously used her endeavours to forward her wish; and after a long conversation with Mrs. Talbot in the presence of the clergyman, and after every point having undergone a thousand discussions, Mrs. Talbot gave an unwilling consent, with the concurrence of the divine. It was agreed upon that in a week the marriage should take place; and even now, Mrs. Talbot, with the warmest affection for her daughter, and a solicitude which made her dread that every hour might rob her of her only child, seemed to say, 'She will never live for that event.'

Susan conveyed the result of the conference to her friend. She received the intelligence with a gleam of delight which seemed to reanimate her entirely. The treacherous flush was deeper on her cheek, and she spoke, although in the hoarse voice which ever accompanies the disease, in rapture. She desired, she urged Susan to write to her lover to call immediately, and flattered herself that he would receive the summons to this strange bidding with equal delight and affection.

Mrs. Talbot was a woman of very good property, the whole of which was settled upon her daughter. If her daughter died without issue, or without being married, it became the

mother's absolutely. This disposition, however, never gave that generous woman a thought. It was her property as long as she lived; and having been rather unfortunate in her marriage, she was resolved never to hazard her liberty again. Mrs. Talbot knew well enough, what some widows of our own time had done well to have remembered, that whenever a young man of prepossessing appearance, whose character has been stamped as void of principle, solicits the hand of a woman at least thirty years his superior, the marriage is thought of merely for the money; and that whilst the woman is using her utmost power to retain the most trivial affection, her wealth is squandered in unbridled licentiousness.

Sufficient for Mrs. Talbot was the solitude of Grove Hall, and sufficient was the excitement of watching over and attending her only child. But a handsome appearance in a man often overcomes the general suspicion of the sex: and Mrs. Talbot, although sensible that Augustus Cornish was a little addicted to the long bow and to deep potations, overlooked in him the faults which in others would have assumed a criminal appearance. Besides, he was her nephew, though not the man for whom she had destined Grove Hall. For a moment the thought that her intentions would be thwarted by this marriage flashed across her, but she was much too liberal to allow it to have the slightest weight in opposition to the wishes of her dying daughter. Still nothing could overcome the shock her feelings sustained as she thought of the ceremony which appeared to her the union of life and death, health and disease; for her opinion of her nephew was such that she doubted he would consent to become a husband under such circumstances. Once she thought of a mock ceremony; but she never had deceived her daughter, and in perfect despair gave up all idea of hindering what she had promised.

To her very considerable astonishment, no objection was raised by her nephew. He candidly admitted having made a proposition, and as candidly declared his intention of fulfilling his engagement if his dearest aunt would sanction the union. He mentioned his bride's health as gradually improving; and, with a countenance which defied suspicion, spoke of days of happiness yet in store for them.

'Surely, surely, Augustus,' said Mrs. Talbot, 'you cannot pretend ignorance of her awful situation. I question if she can outlive the short period between this and that day I so much dread.'

'She assures me she feels better. It is true, she is, I think, thinner, her voice is hoarse; but then her appetite is good, her eyes bright, and her cheek blooming with colour.'

Mrs. Talbot eyed her nephew narrowly during this exhibition of medical knowledge; but he was proof against any assault of the eyes. He had turned over in his mind the chances, and he was resolved to get possession of the money by marriage, and be free of all expenses but those arising from 'the undertaker's bill, or lapidary's scrawl.' He knew just as well as the doctor that a month was the utmost even the most sanguine could expect her to survive.

'I have long been attached to her,' he continued, 'and now my devotion is about to be rewarded, I shall show by my conduct, by my attention and solicitude, how much she is, and ever has been, the object of my sincerest affection.'

An idea of the intelligence of Captain Cornish's father may be gathered from the following conversation.

'Augustus,' said he, tapping his son's curly head when a child, 'do you see those tall trees?'

'Yes, papa,' responded the boy.

'What trees are they, my son?'

'Poplars,' answered the lad.

'Do you know what they are used for?'

That was a puzzler; and the youth answered with much hesitation, 'No.'

'I'll tell you, my child; and now take care not to forget it. They saw them up into pieces and make oak planks of them. And do you know what they do with the oak planks, my child?'

'No,' answered the boy.

'They make mahogany bedposts of them, boy. There, remember all this, because this is what is called useful knowledge.'

Augustus found out a more useful master, and became as cunning as a Russian diplomatist.

Mrs. Talbot in vain endeavoured to master her feelings, and left the room; at which moment Susan entered. Her face was a little flushed, which heightened her charms; and such was her elegance of figure and softness of expression, that the most indifferent could not have passed her by unregarded.

Captain Cornish seemed to undergo some little sensation akin to surprise. Susan expressed her astonishment that Mrs. Talbot was not there; and Augustus very civilly remarked he did not regret the absence of his mother-in-law and aunt, as it afforded him the pleasure of an interview with Miss Monckton. Susan, who was evidently thinking of something else than flattering speeches, sat down near the window, and gave vent to a deep sigh.

'You sigh heavily,' said the handsome captain, as he advanced towards her. 'I wish it were in my power to lighten the load which seems to press upon your mind. And who, may I ask,' continued Cornish, in a voice attuned to as much harmony as he had at his command, 'is the fortunate man who thus occupies so much of that heart as to mar its repose?'

'At present,' replied Susan, 'you are the man who caused that sigh, and who so much, to use your own words, mars my repose.'

'Indeed!' ejaculated Cornish.

'Yes, indeed, Captain Cornish; and strange, nay, rude as it may appear, I wish you so far from me that you could no longer occupy my thoughts.'

'Would absence then, Miss Susan, blot me from your memory?'

'It would save me from an act I shall ever blush to acknowledge, and which nothing but absence can effect.'

'I could easily absent myself, and be under no apprehension of a reprimand; but I would rather be near you, rather listen to your reproaches, rather hear my own name uttered with coldness by you, than be absent from you. Then,' he added, in a Romeo look and tone, 'all the gathering clouds around me seem to dissipate when I "hear thee, see thee, gaze on all those charms!"'

'Sir!' said Susan, rising.

'It is only a quotation, Miss Susan,' said Augustus, with consummate coolness. 'Poets string words, like pearls, and they make the handsomest corollary. You speak of my absence; could I trust you with a secret?'

'I fear, Captain Cornish, I am not sufficiently your equal to be made the depository of your thoughts.'

'I asked you, Miss Monckton, if I might entrust you with a secret?'

'I think it unfair, Captain Cornish, to entrust anyone with a secret. You betray it by making me aware of it; and how, therefore, could you rebuke me if I betrayed it to another?'

'You will oblige me much by receiving it, and promising not to betray it.'

Curiosity overcame discretion; and Captain Cornish put a large official letter into her hand, and begged her to peruse it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARRIAGE OF DEATH.

EVERYTHING was arranged for the marriage. Susan was to be bridesmaid. On this occasion a suitable dress was provided, and it afforded Mrs. Talbot some trifling satisfaction—the only drop of sweetness in the cup brimming with bitterness—in having the opportunity, without hurting the feelings of her daughter's companion, to present her with a very handsome necklace and earrings. Susan had received Bowling's letter, in which he gave her the cheerful intelligence of his promotion; and how far the sailor's words had won her heart is best understood by the letter Bowling received, and which we have given before. In spite of the joy of her generous heart in the knowledge that the poor boy was now a lieutenant in the navy, and still acknowledged with gratitude her former kindness and protection; in spite also of the assurances of a mutual affection, and of everlasting constancy (words readily received by those who are willing to believe them, but sadly discredited by maturer minds), Susan was frequently seen in tears.

'Oh, that I dared betray this secret to Mrs. Talbot,' she said; 'and yet, what good could result? He would swear to die by her side rather than leave her; whilst in his hand is the official order to join his regiment within ten days, in order to embark for the Cape of Good Hope. He would not relinquish the service, for he has vanity enough to sacrifice his cousin rather than lose his uniform and his cockade. Two days hence is the wedding; five days hence and Captain Cornish must be at Portsmouth. My poor friend would die if she knew of this resolution, and she would die of the sudden disappointment if the match were broken off. I must leave it to the Disposer of all events, and ever regret my curiosity, which forced me to receive the burthen of a secret.'

Miss Talbot had made a will in which she left the money given her by her mother to her best friend, Miss Monckton: but Susan was ignorant of such a testament. She never thought of money whilst her mother had enough to maintain the most humble respectability; and her heart was too much occupied by Bowling and her friend to think of any provision when her friend should be no more.

The day arrived, and the poor, sick, emaciated being was dressed as a bride. She fainted twice during the exertion of the toilette; but at each revival she seemed more resolute to go through the ceremony, and after the administration of some restoratives she was declared ready. The clergyman was introduced, the doctor gave her away, and this poor victim of human weakness was married. She was elated with joy at the termination of the affair, and seemed flushed with unusual rosiness when she heard herself addressed as Mrs. Cornish. The ceremony had been performed whilst she reclined on her sofa, for she was far too weak to stand during the period required; and the congratulations which the etiquette of society demanded were rather in accordance with custom than ebullitions of the heart.

Susan could not restrain her tears. The bride had strength enough to rally her on her own expectations of being an officer's wife, and claimed priority of rank. 'Who, indeed,' she said playfully, 'would marry a sailor?—people who are wandering over the ocean, the emblems of inconstancy—rocked by the inconstant wind upon the inconstant wave! I pity you,' continued the excited girl; 'my husband—I have him now, Susan, tied fast to

me for ever—will never leave me: and, in spite of the croaking of the doctor, I shall live to see many happy days with him.'

Susan could not answer; her generous heart was too full; and she would not for worlds have damped the joy which illuminated the eyes of her attenuated friend. She shook her warmly by the hand; but in spite of all endeavours she could not restrain her tears.

'Why, Susan, you make me jealous before I have been an hour a wife. Why should you weep because I am married? Ah, I begin to feel a little of the green-eyed monster, and am almost weak enough to place some credit in that story of my lost abigail.'

'You need not fear, my kind friend,' said Susan, 'any rival in me. No, no; it is not for myself I weep. Since I have been your companion everything has prospered, therefore I regret not my circumstances; neither do I feel disposed to worry myself about the inconstancy of sailors. Mr. Bowling left me a mere child. I was exactly his age, and I only wonder that he ever recollects my name. I cannot, however, mistake his meaning, nor would I for worlds, for he must have a noble heart. No, no, Rosa, I weep for you. The time is very short before disappointment must come, and how will my dear friend be prepared to receive it?'

'Oh, dear,' replied Rosa, rather pettishly, 'do not croak like that disagreeable old doctor.'

It was some time before the bridal dress could be exchanged; for the excitement being partially checked by Susan's tears, the reaction was in proportion. The young wife became pale, unusually weak, and perfectly helpless. At last, however, she was redressed, and appeared occasionally flushed into animation.

In the meantime the bridegroom, who considered the whole business as merely to gratify his cousin in a whim before she died, had not been idle in his speculations. There was a dirty attorney in the village, who enlightened his client upon one or two points, the most material of which was that a will made before marriage is invalid directly the woman becomes *une femme couverte*; and that whatever disposition she might have made, it could only govern the distribution in proportion as he felt inclined to honour her wishes. As to love, he could not have the slightest affection for the 'bag of bones' he considered his wife, and had long since endeavoured, with anything but honourable views, to win the heart of Susan. His home was not far distant; and at the request made by Mrs. Talbot that he would allow her daughter to recover herself from the excitement, he very coolly betook himself to his father's billiard-table, and quite forgot, in the excitement of play, the constant girl who at death's door had married him. He, too, was well aware it was but a nominal marriage, and that his father's house would still remain his home. There was yet a task imposed on him, to which he did not feel equal: it was the divulging to his wife the order for his departure.

At this time it was resolved by the Government to make a descent on the Cape of Good Hope, and to maintain it, in the event of success, as an English colony. It was of the greatest importance in regard to the India trade, and was considered as an easy conquest. Troops were embarked under the command of General Alured Clarke, and the officers of each regiment were fully aware, from the importance of the service, that any flinching or applying for exchange would be considered as wearing a white feather—a disgrace unknown to the British army. The fleet of Indiamen were at Portsmouth, and the day was fixed for their departure. Men-of-war go to sea to look for a fair wind, and the gallant captains of the India fleet, who well won the lion on their buttons, never lingered in port when any service was required of them.

Cornish was no coward: he lied from vanity and want of principle. He was uneasy if anyone was reported to do anything better than he could do it. The admirable Crichton was a fool to him, in his own estimation; and therefore Cornish lied immensely to maintain his ground. As an example of his ability in the Munchausen vein, he once declared he had taken a jack, with a line, that weighed ninety-four pounds—that he had lifted a butt of porter to his mouth, and drunk out of the bung-hole (he did *not* drink it all at a draught)! and that he had walked, one morning in the shooting season, from Tottenham to Cambridge, where he intended to dine, through all the fields, carrying with him his game, which, as he never accidentally missed, amounted to about forty brace of birds. There was not a woman in the county who had not fallen in love with him, nor any fox-hunter who ever could ride like him. He was believed, according to his own account, to have more influence than the lord-lieutenant, and was disgusted at the refusals he was obliged to give to the everlasting request that he would represent different counties in Parliament. However, he only imposed upon people as silly as himself. He did no particular harm to anyone, and had, from the volubility of his words and the brilliancy of his imagination, acquired the name of Captain Pepper—there being an anecdote concerning a certain Tom Pepper, who was so superior in the art as to be turned out of a place which most men are particularly anxious to avoid.

In stating the case to his friend the attorney, he declared that the enterprise at the Cape would, to a certainty, fail if he did not lend his aid, and therefore it was imperative

on him to go, although he was aware that his bride would ill receive the intelligence; and he prayed the attorney to invent some story likely to be credited—thus paying the attorney a professional compliment, and acknowledging how much he was himself discredited. The attorney seemed to think, for once in his life, that the truth was preferable to any concealment; and after recommending his client instantly to prepare a will, which he was quite ready to draw up to the prejudice of anybody, advised Captain Augustus Cornish to return to Mrs. Talbot, and show her the letter. 'Anything you think proper to add as to your military reputation, the probable failure of the expedition in the event of your counsels being withdrawn, or the sudden dismay of the troops, should they be deprived of your guidance, may be poured into the ears in proportion as there is an avidity to listen; but I need not advise one so qualified to judge of the fair sex—one whose conquests in the fields of love are as numerous as those of Marlborough in the fields of war.'

'You overcome me—positively—damme! —Good morning.'

'There goes,' said the attorney, as he looked out of his window, 'about as shallow a pated coxcomb as ever it fell to my lot to be acquainted with, and the veriest murderer of truth that ever escaped the execution of public opinion.'

'A shrewd, sharp-sighted, clever man that attorney,' said Augustus to himself; 'he is aware of my power, and of my courage. He recommends a will, because he knows I cannot restrain myself in the presence of an enemy; and his allusion to Marlborough was a compliment to myself.'

Great was the surprise of Mrs. Talbot when the letter was placed in her hands, and she was made aware that Cornish had received it some days before the marriage. That letter might have saved her the criminal act to which she imagined she had been accessory. To rebuke her son-in-law with duplicity was useless; the marriage was celebrated; and how now to turn the letter to the best advantage occupied her active mind.

'Only two days more!' she said; 'that is indeed sudden.'

'And the difficulties,' said Augustus, 'are insurmountable. Had I been on half-pay I could have avoided so hasty an order, because I could easily have been absent when the letter arrived; but my being on leave, and having named my father's house as the place where any despatch could reach me, renders that evasion impossible. I have no time to exchange—to sell out—or get sick; if I do not join I shall be subject to a court-martial—dismissed the service in disgrace—scouted as a coward—degraded as a man. If I go, I leave behind me the dearest object of my life in a precarious state of health; and how long it may be before I return who can possibly tell?'

'It is a difficult case,' said Mrs. Talbot, whose expression of countenance, had Cornish been an observant man, was evidence of her having read the secret wishes of his heart; and these were in accordance with her own, for she wished him far away, so that the very whisperings of the marriage might not be trumpeted throughout the county. She bade the captain go and watch over his bride; and, ringing her bell, desired Miss Monckton might attend her.

'Again, Susan,' she said, as Miss Monckton obeyed the call, 'again I must solicit your kindness in our behalf. Read that letter.'

Susan instantly recognised the same letter that Cornish had placed in her hand. She hesitated one moment, in which the quickness of woman's thoughts flashed across her —'She might know I have seen it, and this is to try me,' overcame all others, and indicated honesty as the best policy. 'I have read it before,' she said.

'When?' asked Mrs. Talbot, with some quickness.

'Before the marriage,' replied Susan.

'And you kept it a secret from me! This letter, Susan, would have saved us the painful ceremony we have witnessed, by faithfully promising that on his return the marriage should take place.'

'I foolishly consented to secrecy, Mrs. Talbot; and my honour was pledged before I read the contents.'

'Young ladies,' replied Mrs. Talbot, with some degree of sarcasm, 'would do well not to pledge their honour at all.'

Susan burst into tears; it was the first unkind word she had ever received to make her feel her dependency; and in the expression she read a doubt as to the truth of Waller's assertions.

'Dry those tears, child,' said Mrs. Talbot, recovering her serenity; 'none but fools mourn over events they cannot remedy. I am well aware why my nephew consented to this union, and why he seeks now to abandon his wife. There is some truth in what he has said—his name will be tarnished if he refuses to go; this point must be urged strongly on Rosa. A woman who does not feel every imputation cast on her husband as hurled against herself, neither deserves to share his honours, nor preserve his affections. We must make this the grand point: the honour she will acquire by the preservation of his honour;—the disgrace she will share if he is branded as a coward. Go, Susan, you must break this subject carefully. I will come to your aid when it is most required; it is better one should follow the other, than that both should appear together. Send my son-in-law'—(she said

this in rather a sharp manner)—'to me directly.'

It was a harsh, ungenerous task to be forced to open a subject so painful to the invalid: but ably was it done. Susan spoke carelessly of the news of the day—the great and important service about to be performed, the high character of the general, and the rush of officers as volunteers; how each father urged his best interest to get his son a partaker in the glorious enterprise; and how each soldier cursed the lazy hours which seemed to linger through the days.

'And Augustus,' said Rosa, brightening up; 'does he not wish to be there?'

'Indeed he does; but then he could not leave you.'

'I would not have him here to share my sickness; I would rather he shared the enterprise, and came home to me covered with honour. Let me speak to him, I will overcome his scruples. I shall not be the first bride who has separated with her husband at the church-door. A captain went to India for three years, and his beautiful bride returned to her parents to linger out that time in watching his fortune, and in sharing his distress. I shall live to see him return; and I can manage to endure the parting.'

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE AUTHOR FLATTERS HIMSELF ARE TWO VERY PRETTY SONGS, AND EXPECTS SOME PROFESSOR WILL SET THEM TO MUSIC.

'A GLORIOUS jollification, Watson!—success to the service!—I'll sail with you to-morrow morning for a doubloon! and I'd sing you a song to-night if I did not think it unbecoming a captain to tune up his pipes to the disturbance of others!'

'Never mind that,' said Watson. 'I'll give you leave to chant as loud as the chimes of a cathedral clock; only take care old Jervis does not hear you.'

'He would not mind a man's wetting his commission, and we will proceed to this duty first; hand over yours.' Bowling took the order, and, bending it up into a cocked-hat shape, filled it full of pretty strong brandy and water; and before it had time to leak through, he drank to Watson's 'Success in the navy; his success on shore; prize-money now, and Greenwich Hospital in old age!'

'Now hand us yours, Captain Bowling, and I'll do as much for you, if good wishes can avail. Here's all the luck the world can give, and all the pleasures life can enjoy! Success to you, Captain Bowling!'

'Bear a hand, my dear fellow,' said Bowling, interrupting him, 'the grog is leaking through, and all my luck will ooze away.'

'There,' said Watson, reversing the cocked hat, 'there's not enough left to tempt a Jamaica fly, and I took it as strong as my heart's desire. It was neat as imported, and although I have swallowed enough in my time to float the brig, yet I never drank a drop with half the pleasure I have drunk this. Come, tune up your pipes, it's only half-past eight.'

'I ordered my gig at nine,' said Bowling.

'You could have had mine,' said Watson, rubbing his hands at the very idea of *his* gig, *his* ship. He was fairly turning round in the whirlpool of intoxication occasioned by joy, not by rum, and could not fancy himself the character he had a right to assume. 'Shoot a-head! Captain Bowling, and save the tide.'

'When the breeze swells the canvas, the anchor's a-trip,
And the ensign's hauled down from the peak of the ship;*
When the land is receding, and fresh is the breeze
That bears us away on the breast of the seas;
Hope swells my fond bosom, and this is my strain—
"Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again."

'When the decks are all clear, and the foe is in sight,
And the ensign waves proudly to challenge the fight;
When the smoke of the broadside is curling around,
And the cheers grow the louder, the louder's the sound;
Hope swells my proud bosom, and this is my strain,—
"Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again."

'When the enemy's struck, and her colours are down,
And the cross of St. George o'er the French flag is shown;
When we've mourned for the dead who have fallen that day,
And our hearts are with those who are then far away;
Hope swells my fond bosom, and this is my strain—
"Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again."

'When the winds and the waves are in tumult and strife,
And the fever stalks forth as the foe to man's life:
Though distant in climes of the snow or the sun,
Ere the battle is fought, or the battle is won;
I think of the girl who enlivens the strain,—
For believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again.'

'Bravo!' said Watson, 'bravo! Here's a health to pretty Susan, for pretty she must be, and success to her lover who wrote the song. Lord! what is a sailor without a Susan? I wonder if this was black-eyed Susan?'

Bowling smiled as he said, 'I fancy this Susan is at any rate as handsome as ever black-eyed Susan might have been.'

'Well, it's very odd, Captain Bowling,' said Watson, after a moment's reflection, 'that sailors always fall in love. Now, I'm not at all particular in that respect. I don't care one straw if the girl's black, brown, or

* Hauling down the ensign when a ship goes out of a port is as much as to say 'Good-bye.'

fair—if she's a nose as flat as a flounder, or if it's arched in the middle, like a bridge—if her hair is as fine as the hemp in a Spanish yarn, or as stiff and as curly as a door-mat—as long as she's young. I'm in love with youth; that's always fresh and rosy. I never could fall in love with anything like parchment, except in the shape of a commission. No, no! hurrah, I say, for the wind that blows—the ship that goes—and the *lass* that loves a sailor!'

'Why, Watson, the parchment has made you young again, or the grog has warmed up your heart to fever heat. Can you sing?'

'Can't I, that's all! If I never sang before, I could sing now; and if old Jervis only knew how light he has made one poor fellow, he would not mind my being a little excited this evening.'

'Why, you deserved it. There's not a braver fellow ever stood between the stem and the stern of the ship than Thomas Watson. I think I see you now with the cutlass in your mouth, the shot falling around you like hail, so close that they splashed the water in your face whilst your eye was fixed on the port which never winked to the whiz of the balls. You deserved what you got, and Jervis never yet let a braver fellow linger out his life without promotion. You led the way—I only followed.'

'But you were overboard first, and set the example: I only followed *that*. Blow high, blow low,' said Watson, 'let me only have you for a guide, and I'll follow you, if it's to draw the black gentleman out of his lodgings, as a terrier does a badger.'

'We shall meet again, my old friend,' said Bowling, 'and now for your song.'

'Here goes—excuse the voice, it's husky with joy; and as for the music, I never liked that since I first heard a hand-organ and a hurdy-gurdy. Suit the word to the action and the action to the word, as the auctioneer said when he knocked down a bidder:—

'Pass the grog, pass the grog!
Your sailor is a jolly dog,
Ever laughing, ever gay,—
Sings at night and works by day,
Cares no more for wounds or wealth
Than doctors for their patients' health.

'Fill the bowl, fill the bowl!
Be to-night a jovial soul,
Here's to her who loves a tar;
Here's to love, and here's to war;
Here's to youth's dark flashing eyes:
Here's war, which brings us many a prize.

'Fill the glass, fill the glass!
Every sailor loves a lass;
Mine's the maiden fresh and fair,
Clear blue eyes and auburn hair;
If dark or hazel, brown or green,
If she's young, she's beauty's queen.'

'Well sung, Watson; it does my heart good to see you so happy, and I wish you a wife as young and as green as you can desire.'

'Captain Bowling,' said the midshipman, 'your gig is alongside.'

'Tell them to remain in the boat,' said Bowling, who instantly thought of the secret he wished respected—a secret which almost all men are inclined to keep, although it is more to their honour than any advancement through interest: yet the expression so frequently used as a kind of reproach, 'Oh, he rose from before the mast,' thereby implying the man could not have been born a gentleman, outweighs all consideration of personal service and merited reward.

'Good night,' said Bowling, 'good night, Watson. We shall weigh to-morrow at daylight—here comes the flag-ship's boat—then for our doubloon bet; and if, old boy, I ever get another chance with you at a fort, I will see if I cannot be first. Success to you, wherever you go; and see, I drain my glass to the toast.'

Captain Bowling was now on deck. To his astonishment he found the whole crew of the brig upon deck also. Every man had his hat off, and every one seemed to outvie the other in the determination of being heard. 'God bless you, sir!'—'God bless you, Captain Bowling!' 'We'll all volunteer for your ship, sir.'—'May you live for ever, your honour!'—'Wull, I hope you'll be happy, sir.'—'Success to you below, sir, and a comfortable berth aloft afterwards, anyhow!'

'Thank you, my lads, thank you!' said Bowling, warmly. 'Every happiness attend you, and lots of prize-money to make the fiddles play at Portsmouth Hard! Where's the ship's corporal?'

'Here, your honour!' said a smart-looking Irishman.

'Take this for the ship's company, and when you get to Barbadoes, ask the captain in my name to let you have some liberty-liquor to remember your old commander. And now good night to you, my lads.'

The *Echo's* gig's crew had their oars up; the boat shoved off; and no sooner was the bow-oar lifted up, before it fell in the water, than Bowling heard, 'Now then, my lads!' and three such cheers followed, such hearty cheers, that the vice-admiral started in his cabin. 'I like to hear that!' said Jervis to Captain Grey; it's a proof that young man was as good as he was brave.' The gig's crew returned the cheer, before the echo had ceased to respond from hill to hill. It was a beautiful, clear, calm silent night, and that cheer was long remembered by Bowling.

It is very difficult to describe the first sensations produced by a command. At once to be free from all control; to be the absolute monarch of an obedient people; to be approached with respect; to hear no murmur of discontent, or in contradiction to your authority; to have the power of inflicting punishment or rewarding services; to have

the responsibility, the heavy responsibility, of life or death (for on many occasions the order of the captain saves the one, or courts the other), must produce very powerful sensations.

It was with a certain degree of modesty that Captain Bowling received a large packet which the officer of the watch had received from the admiral's ship; which Bowling immediately took below, after wishing the officer good-night.

He found not the tallow candles of a lieutenant's command, but wax candles in silver candlesticks, the steward waiting for orders, and altogether a degree of comfort he never had before experienced in his life. It reminded him of Captain Collingwood's cabin on a smaller scale. The *Echo* was fresh from England, and Bowling had escaped another plague, the worst of all inflictions in tropical climates: there were no cockroaches whizzing about the lights; no centipedes crawled along the beams; no scorpions concealed in the lockers; mosquitoes never come that distance from the shore, and the large black ant had not yet paid a visit to the *Echo*.

Bowling opened the packet. The first was his order to sail at daylight, and make the best of his way to the Equator, in longitude 40°, there to open the sealed orders. A letter, written by the admiral, addressed to Captain Bowling, was next placed and opened on the table; he rang his bell, and desired the first-lieutenant might be sent to him.

'We must be under weigh, he said to that officer, 'five minutes before daylight; and be careful to be rather sooner than later. Is there anything to be done before we sail?'

'The purser has some papers for you to sign, sir, which must be returned to the ships to-night.'

'Very good; if you have no other boat down, use my gig. Send the purser to me.' The papers were signed; orders were left to call the captain at four o'clock; the wine and water was removed untasted from his table; and Bowling, with no small anxiety, opened the admiral's letter.

It was one of those letters which are most beneficial to a young officer. It was highly complimentary to his courage. It recommended to Bowling the necessity of always well weighing the worth of a prize before he hazarded its capture; it recalled to his good sense the foolish sacrifices often made by young captains to gain their own promotion by an enormous expenditure of life; and called to Bowling's recollection the fearful responsibility which rested upon every officer who uselessly sacrificed a human being. 'Our country,' it said in one part, 'requires an occasional dash to awe an enemy, and many lives are sometimes saved by this show of vigilance, bravery, and power, as one severe example in punishments often is the means of rendering such an occurrence unnecessary afterwards; but never hazard the life of a man but under the sternest emergency; and never have recourse to punishment but when an example is absolutely necessary.' The letter concluded with the earnest wish for Bowling's health and advancement, and a desire that the admiral might occasionally receive an account of his proceedings.

There was no happier man alive than Bowling: he could not sleep; he wished to go on board to thank the admiral in person; he thought of writing to him the warmest expressions of his gratitude; he was afraid to fall asleep, lest he should slumber past four o'clock; and in this excitement, occasionally humming Watson's song—'Here's to her who loves a tar—here's to love, and here's to war,'—he turned and tumbled about in his cot, mixing up in the jumble of his half dream and half wakefulness, the admiral's letter with the last line of each verse of his own song, until he heard seven bells strike, when out he jumped, and called for a light.

'How many bells struck?' he said to the sentinel, who came head-foremost into his cabin with the lantern.

'Seven bells in the *first* watch, sir,' answered the man.

'Oh, never mind the light, then,' and he turned in again, making a most sensible resolution not to be so very over-zealous; but although he had four hours to sleep, he could not bear to close his eyes for fear something might be remiss in the morning, and the vigilant admiral remark that he had been deceived in his *protégé*.

Very different was it with old Watson. All the fire of youth had been pretty well taken out of him long before; and the recent attempt at wetting his commission made him feel less inclined for activity than usual. He read his orders; and, going on deck, gave directions to be called at daylight; and that the brig was to weigh and keep company with the *Echo*. He intended, it was quite evident, to take a captain's privilege, and let others work whilst he slept.

As the first streak of day appeared, the *Echo* was under weigh; her sails trimmed; every stick set in a real man-of-war style; and she was creeping to the eastward under the influence of a light land-air, which, as she opened the point, soon changed into the sea-breeze; but the *Zebra* was still at anchor. Bowling inwardly cursed the last night's jollification, which thus made Watson slow to obey the orders of his admiral; and whilst he was surveying his late command through the glass, and observing that something was at last stirring, a gun from the *Boyne*—the daylight gun—was fired: he turned to look at her; he saw the admiral paying him the same compliment; whilst at that moment the signal went up for the *Zebra* 'to weigh

directly.' Bowling, suspecting that some signal might be made to him, kept a man ready at the signal halyards; he saw some flags going aloft, which, before they reached the mast-head, he was satisfied were his pendants. The answering pendant was run up to the truck unbroken; and as soon as the flag was broken, the signal was answered. It was, 'Your zeal I have noticed.' The signal for the *Zebra* to weigh was again repeated with a gun; and Watson found his doubloon and his credit fast going from him.

'There,' said the admiral, pointing to the *Echo*, 'that man will be a credit to me, and to the service; he was a little *before* his time. That one,' he continued, pointing to the *Zebra*, 'is just fit to go on shore and get married; he has outlived all the desire of an officer to be first in the field—his promotion has already ruined him; and he had better sleep with his wife, than slumber in his cot.'

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT A FOREMAST MAN NEVER IS SO GOOD A JUDGE OF SAFETY AS A CAPTAIN.

After considerable delay, in spite even of Watson's appearance on deck, the *Zebra* was got under weigh; and by noon both vessels were out of sight of the admiral. Bowling's orders were to use his utmost endeavours to gain as quickly as possible the longitude in the Equator, where his sealed orders were to be opened; he could not, therefore, heave-to to communicate once more with his old shipmate, and infuse some of his own spirit for the service in Watson. He therefore telegraphed to him a compliment on the powder the admiral had expended, and wished him good-bye. He then hoisted his ensign and hauled it down again, which means, that the ships may part company.

The *Echo* was in good order; and Bowling soon made her a match for any vessel in the rapidity of her manœuvres. He carried a great press of sail; and on his arrival at the appointed place, he broke the seal of his despatches on the quarter-deck; and the same was duly inserted in the log. He now found himself ordered to the Cape of Good Hope, with particular injunctions not to communicate with any vessels outward-bound, and, as far as it was possible, to keep his destination a secret.

At dinner, on that everlastingly hot day—for, in spite of the awnings and continually wetting the decks, the pitch of the seams bubbled up, and nature seemed almost exhausted from the heat—the first lieutenant gave a very intelligible hint of his desire to know their destination; and Bowling, with considerable address, evaded the question. But in the course of conversation the captain asked the doctor if, amongst his other works, he had any books of travels in the East Indies?

The doctor replied that he had none; but that he had some interesting accounts of the Dutch settlement at the Cape.

'The devil you have!' said Bowling. 'Do me the favour to allow me to see them.'

In the evening, when the officers resorted on deck, to inhale enough cool air to get their lungs at proper heat, Bowling was below, pondering over the book the doctor had lent. He was seen consulting charts, making sketches, and taking notes.

'We are bound to Madras,' said the first-lieutenant.

'To the Cape, for any sum,' interrupted the doctor. 'If we were bound to India, the captain would have time enough to glean all the knowledge in that book before our arrival. He is getting up the history of the Cape to astonish the Dutch Governor on our arrival: there's something in the wind, you may rely upon it.'

'I wish,' said the second lieutenant, who was a wit, 'that it was a little freshness; for even now it's more like the breath of an oven than a Christian's atmosphere;—if we don't get out of these dolderums in a week, my skeleton will be keeping watch over my clothes. I wonder where we are bound to?'

'We are all wondering about that,' said his messmate; 'and I think it odd, as we cannot tell the secret to any but the sharks, that the captain keeps it all to himself.'

'Bless you, the flying fish would whisper it to the dolphin when they pass down their gullets, and it would soon be known over the ocean. For my part, I don't care one straw where we go to, as long as we go out of this broiling, baking heat. I don't wonder at everyone being crusty in such weather.'

'The men, sir, want to know if you will give them permission to bathe?'

'I'll ask the captain,' replied the first-lieutenant to the midshipman.

Orders were immediately given to get a large lower-studding sail overboard, in which permission was given for the men to bathe; but a command accompanied it that no man should venture outside of the sail, on any account.

There always are some men in every ship who disregard all caution; and the *Echo* had her share of these foolhardy fellows, who never consider why an order is given, but think it rather unnecessary or tyrannical, and out of pure contradiction oppose it.

The sail was soon pretty well filled with bathers, grateful for the opportunity of getting cool, or comparatively cool, in that lukewarm sea. Some were amusing themselves splashing their neighbours; here one boy, who could swim, was ducking his messmate, whilst the poor urchin took in vast quantities

of salt water, to the infinite amusement of others, who laughed at his wry faces. There was noise enough alongside to have rivalled the largest school at a break-up at holiday-times.

Whilst the officers were amusing themselves in looking at the fun, or lounging over the taffrail, some of the men were availing themselves of the absence of the official eye to jump overboard from the cat-head, or fore-chains, diving down head foremost, and coming up close to the rim of the sail, in which were the bathers. By degrees they increased their distance, and one, more venturous than the rest, dropped from the sprit-sail yard-arm.

It is well known that as tyrants are the greatest cowards, so the most ferocious animals are the most timid. A tiger would skulk away at the noise that a bull-dog would have the curiosity to inquire into. An alligator will sneak from the brake, and endeavour to creep silently into the water, to avoid the cry a child would make, if it scratched its face with a brier. Sharks generally shun the surf; and a stone thrown in the water will scare a thousand. These are generally well-ascertained facts; but there are exceptions to them all. The hungry tiger will seize a bullock—the half-famished alligator has been known to attack a boat, and in spite of the courageous resistance of the crew, to have seized one and carried him away. Sharks have been known to have dashed at a soldier washing his legs at Port Royal Point, and to have bitten them off; nay, they have followed ships in action, undismayed by the noise of the guns, or the fall of the shot; and so susceptible are they of sound, that they have been known to follow music. The Equator is the habitation of these ferocious and appalling monsters. They are larger perhaps in the vicinity of Bermuda than almost any other part; whilst the tiger-shark of the West Indies has gained its unenviable appellation from its cunning, its resolution, and its ferocity. Sharks have been seen which have bitten at a bait, been hooked, and held, until harpoons have been driven into them, then to have shaken themselves off the hook and returned directly to snatch at a fresh bait. It is hard to cope with such determination and courage.

The man who had dropped from the sprit-sail yard-arm was soon to be outdone by another, who, running out to the jib-boom end, dropped overboard, and on coming to the surface, floated a little to regain his breath; he then struck out leisurely for the sail. He was a fine handsome fellow, one who was a stranger to fear, and who had often dared death. He was under the dolphin-striker when a midshipman observed the fin of a shark; the fish was evidently going fast across the bows. The alarm was instantly given, and although the sail was a sufficient defence, everyone used his utmost endeavour to regain the vessel.

The cry of 'A shark! a shark!' reached the ears of the seaman, who struck out quicker to regain the sail. The officers rushed to the side, and a boat which had been lowered, and in which were two youngsters, was immediately hailed and desired to splash their oars and make as much noise as possible. The man gained the edge of the sail when the shark was seen under him. A simultaneous burst of horror came from the assembled crowd. The poor fellow felt that he was the object of commiseration, although within an inch of safety; and before he could lift himself into the sail—which, from the men having left it, was now higher than before—the white belly of the infernal creature was seen, and in a second the water was coloured with blood. The man let go his hold, and his mutilated body presented itself as a resistless object to its infuriated enemy. The blood had been tasted; before the boat could near the horrible scene, the monster rose again, and the poor fellow was taken away, and sank to rise no more.

It is impossible to paint the dismay of that ship's company at witnessing the horrible catastrophe, and no one felt it more keenly than Bowling, for, as the poet who afterwards did credit to his memory remarks, 'His heart was kind and soft.' The eyes of the men seemed to endeavour to penetrate the ocean, which was rendered obscure from the blood of their shipmate; and it was deemed advisable instantly to withdraw their attention by the calling of all hands to muster.

It was well known who was the unfortunate sufferer thus taken from them; but Bowling thought this time the best, whilst the scene was fresh before their eyes, to make a proper impression upon his men. The mutilated corpse had sunk, and other sharks had been seen, attracted no doubt by their pilot fish, who readily scent blood, and lead their protectors to their food.

'We have been but a very short time together,' said Bowling to his men, 'and one life has been sacrificed by the disobedience of my orders. It is an example to which I refer with horror. I gave positive directions that no man should go out of the sail. I foresaw that an accident might occur, and I guarded against it. My orders have been disobeyed, and you see the fearful consequences which have ensued. Where is the boatswain?' Mr. Lanyard stepped forward.

'Did you see that poor fellow drop from the jib-boom end?'

'No, sir; I was in my cabin.'

The same question was put to the gunner, to the captain of the forecastle; but although many had seen it, not one avowed it. Captain Bowling then adverted to the impossibility of a man's running out to the jib-boom end when the foresail was hauled up without being seen,

and again warning his men that he would have the most implicit obedience to his orders, sent them below to talk over a scene which a sailor never forgets.

Captain Bowling had endeavoured as much as possible to imitate the behaviour of Captain Collingwood, and upon this occasion he put one of his maxims in force. Whenever Collingwood had found it requisite to find fault with an officer, he invariably did it the first time in a kind but firm manner. He never sent for that officer on the quarter-deck, and by any hasty word lowered him in his own estimation, and also in that of his inferiors; but he showed the error in its proper colour, and warned the officer of the impropriety of its consequences. Bowling, when the hands were piped down, walked to the taffrail. The first lieutenant, if on deck, always walks by the captain's side. Bowling, in the most gentlemanly manner, rebuked his officer in such a low voice that it was not overheard. He told him he should have placed midshipmen to see his orders were not disobeyed, and should himself have seen those midshipmen attended to their duty; that even from the quarter-deck this ought to have been observed, and that whilst he regretted the unpleasant duty of thus finding fault with his first-lieutenant, he felt the greater necessity from the horrible accident which had occurred of imploring him to be more circumspect in future.

There are some men in the navy who would do well if they followed this example. There is nothing so degrading to an officer of rank as an intemperate reprimand before his inferiors. If he be respectful, as he would have others respect him, his conduct is said to have merited the rebuke from his not having defended it. If both parties lose their temper, a court-martial generally follows, and neither party gains by the result. A rebuke, to be effective, and not to sacrifice either party, must be done in calmness and in privacy; if such unhappily is ineffective, the sooner the inferior withdraws from the superior the better. The first requisite in a commanding officer is, as Bonaparte observed, 'health;' the second, 'temper.' Without the first, the second is seldom found; and without the second, a good officer, mingling the gentleman with the commander, cannot exist. 'Keep your temper' ought to be written on one side of the chronometer, and on the other, 'Wind me up on Saturday.'

There are some men in the navy who, in the intemperance of passion (with just reason enough left to know that they will escape kicking under the garb of their rank), have threatened to flog their first-lieutenant; and there are first-lieutenants who, cringing and lick-spittling to such a tyrant, have submissively bowed the neck, and walked away like frightened curs. For the honour of the navy, be it said, this is only found where the victim of abuse is some poor fellow who has tumbled from the clouds, and whose parents are as unknown as the creature is insignificant. To make a good officer, a man must be a gentleman; they are inseparable. The man who cannot command his tongue and his temper is the worst man to entrust with any command. The supercilious and the arrogant always meet from men endowed with common sense the contempt such childish frivolity deserves. Well might Shakespeare say, 'That foolish man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,' etc. Captain Bowling's conduct had the effect upon the first-lieutenant the former anticipated; he became sensible of its delicacy, and practised towards his inferiors the same kindness and forbearance.

The *Echo* at last got out of those dolderums, the curse of all voyagers. There nature sinks under the overwhelming power of the sun; a general lassitude prevails; the ocean seems weary of motion, and calmly sleeps, her broad expanse idly reflecting the heaven above her, from which it receives its intensity of blue. There the turtle dozes almost in security, the shark's large fin seems too idle to mark the progress of the fish, the sea is not even disturbed by a breath of air, and in its large mirror everything seems placid and motionless. At last, the current having swept her to the southward, a light breeze aloft caught the sails; once more a gentle air disturbed the face of the waters; the sea rippled at the bows, and, escaping from that week's enthralment, the *Echo* got into the sea-breeze, the trade wind, and crowded her canvas towards her destination.

It was early in the month of August, 1795, that the *Echo* made the Cape of Good Hope. No sooner had she discovered the land than a squadron of ships were seen standing in towards Simon's Bay. A vessel, apparently about the size of the *Echo*, tacked on perceiving the *Echo*, and stood towards her; signals were exchanged. The stranger was the *Rattlesnake;* and both vessels followed the squadron, which was led by the *Monarch*, bearing the flag of Sir George Elphinstone, into Simon's Bay. His force consisted of four line-of-battle ships and the two brigs; and they had on board a detachment of the 78th Regiment, under the command of Major-General Craig. The despatches of the *Echo* seemed to occupy the attention of the admiral. Everything now breathed of war; preparations were made for some active service, and a general animation prevailed.

The Cape of Good Hope was at this time under the command of the Dutch governor, General Sluysken; and as it was deemed advisable that such an important place should not fall by any negotiation or attack into

the hands of the French government, it was modestly proposed to the general that the settlement should be placed under the *protection* of the British flag. There was no misunderstanding the meaning of the message; it was a gentle command to surrender the place, and the imposing force which had come to make the *request* was a sufficient indication of the intentions of the admiral. Calling things by their proper names, or putting the message into language so plain that no blockhead could misunderstand it, it amounted to this: 'Dear General,—If you will place the Cape under the protection of his Britannic Majesty, I shall not *take* it from you; but if you do not, I shall.'

The blood of the old Dutchman got to fever heat, without the use of his pipe. He sent back a positive refusal in the fewest possible words; and at once shook off the lethargy which occasionally attends his countrymen. He gave orders to the inhabitants of Simon's Town to depart, and mentioned his determination of setting fire to the town.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH THE CAPE BECAME IN REALITY A CAPE OF GOOD HOPE TO OUR HERO.

THE determination of General Sluysken (Slyskin, as the sailors called him) was not long a secret; and it became necessary for the admiral to prevent a calamity which was not only ungenerous towards the proprietors, but of considerable importance to the English. The Dutch were not quite so active in obeying the orders as the governor had been in issuing them. They lingered at their thresholds—the furniture was lazily lumbered into the heavy carts—and before one quarter could be removed, four hundred and fifty men of the 78th Regiment, and three hundred and fifty of those gallant fellows, the Marines, were hastily landed; and making one rush at the town, they took possession of it without any resistance.

The Dutch possessed a post of great importance in the pass of Muyzenburg, which is about six miles from Cape Town. It is overlooked by heights that were soon occupied by the Dutch militia and the Hottentots.

The British force was altogether too insignificant to oppose those numerous troops, and still more so to attack their positions; but resolution is equal to numbers, as velocity is equal to weight. From these heights the Dutch amused themselves by firing on the English patrols; and any person reconnoitring the position afforded capital practice for the 'Make ready—present—fire and load'—part of the Dutch exercise. The fire was never returned—the object was to take the Cape under our protection, as civilly set forth in the message;—not to murder the innocent subjects of the Dutch monarch: but this everlasting firing grew a great deal too noisy to be allowed long to continue. A few days were lost in the hope of the arrival of the fleet from England; and the tidings of this expedition, and its probable sailing, constituted the important despatches which had been entrusted to Bowling. Now, however, hope deferred only made the heart sick. A new joy soon sprang up when the orders came to each ship to muster a certain number of small-arm men, to be under the command of Captain Bowling, of the *Echo*, and Captain Spranger, of the *Rattlesnake*. The amount of seamen selected for this service were about one thousand; and the whole force united, the 78th Regiment, the Marines, and the seamen, numbered two thousand eight hundred men. These men were landed without any opposition, and were assisted in their attacks by the boats of the squadron, armed with carronades.

On the morning of the 17th, the general advance began; and great was the trouble experienced by Bowling in keeping his amphibious army in their proper position. Jack has no idea of the necessity of keeping step, or keeping in line—a flight of wild ducks are much more obedient than a division of small-armed men, sent to co-operate with regular troops; and without each man is kept between two marines, it's a hundred to one if a stray pig coming within hail of the detachment is not sufficient inducement to make every man rush forward to secure so savoury a prize: a flock of geese are irresistible. Sailors are very fastidious in their food. Ham and eggs may be esteemed the first delicacy; after which, a roast goose has no rival. The march was along the shore, which was sandy, hot, and tiresome: but on these occasions, the more difficulties, the more annoyances which occur, the more fun is found in the sailors. As the pass was at some distance, and the boats cleared away any obstacles in the shape of the enemy, the men, although kept in some degree of regularity, strolled a little, and talked a great deal.

'Holy Father!' said an Irishman, who had trotted over every bog in the county of Sligo, 'here's a footing for a gentleman—it's as much as a duck could do to waddle over this sand—bad luck to it!'

'Form two deep!' roared General Craig.

'By my soul, I'm too deep already!' said another, up to his knees in the loose, hot sand.

'Why don't you march together?'

'March! do you call it?—It's much more like a hop. Oh, bad luck to the day I ever came for a sailor, to be turned into a soldier!'

'Nonsense—nonsense!' said a good-humoured sergeant, who attempted to keep the men in some order; 'we had a sail with you, and now you'll have a march with us.

Cheer up, Paddy; we are all of one party—all in the same boat!'

'In the same boat, Mr. Sergeant, we may be; but can you tell us how we are off for *skulls?*'

Not even Bowling could help smiling at this, although he was not in a laughing humour: whilst in his own element he had no fears for any result, but on shore he knew he could not keep his men up to military discipline, or make soldiers of a crew who hated the very idea of a lobster. If ever a first-lieutenant wants an effective punishment, without appearing to be inflicting it, let him only practise the culprits at the small-arms exercise, and he will succeed more effectually than all the bright polishing, or all the oakum-picking in the world. It is almost impossible to make sailors understand a march and counter-march; and you may drill them as much as you like, but directly the fun begins, in the shape of firing, they will set to work their own fashion, and blaze away at random.

In the meantime, the ships were not idle; they followed the boats in shore, and took up good and effective positions. They soon succeeded in getting well within range of the Dutch camp, after having driven the enemy from two very commanding positions. In vain the gallant General Craig used his utmost endeavours to share in the glory of driving the enemy from their camp. The seamen, now impressed with the necessity of military discipline, acted well in concert with the soldiers, and marched merrily along. The fire of the ships at last drove the enemy from their camp, which was afterwards taken possession of by General Craig, who, in spite of all exertions, could not reach the spot in time to co-operate with the ships.

The Dutch, driven from their camp, took up an advantageous position on a ridge of rocky heights, not far distant from the field of battle; but they were not long indulged with the idea of security. The advanced guard of seventy-eight, supported by the battalion, drove them from the heights, and the position thus gained was of great importance to the British forces. Now all was joy with the sailors on shore. They began to understand their work; and although, as the Irishman observed, they were only paid for fighting on board a ship, they had no objection to a liberty-day on shore, to assist their friends in any amusements.

The Dutch began to fear for the loss of the settlement. The steady advance and the continued success of the enemy had damped a little of the hope which inspired them with a belief of the security of their positions. The object was now evidently Cape Town. The British were within six miles of that situation, and General Sluysken saw the necessity of active operations; he therefore reinforced his troops with all his disposable force from Cape Town: eight field-pieces were brought forward, and a vigorous attack made to regain the lost positions.

As the Irishman said, now comes the fun.

The first battalion of seamen were under the command of Bowling: and seeing the enemy advance, he recommended his men to look to their muskets rather than the sand on which they walked. Bowling had crossed the water with his battalion, supported by Major Hill and his marines. The Dutch warmly saluted them, but no shot was returned, and considerable discipline and coolness were exhibited by both seamen and marines upon this trying occasion. The enemy, after manœuvring some time, made a desperate attempt, which was perfectly frustrated by the intrepidity of Bowling and his party; and the result was that the Dutch were defeated in all points, and retired. From the 8th of August to the end of the month the Dutch made frequent attacks; and having met with some partial success, their general meditated one grand attack upon the British camp, which would, if successful, free him from his enemies, and drive them to their ships again. During this time, the seamen had undergone continual drillings; they could march with some steadiness, although all attempts to begin, at the beginning, 'the goose-step,' were unavailing.

There can be no doubt but the British were in a very perilous situation. It was evident their force had been considered too weak to advance, and delays on shore are sadly against the habits of the seamen; besides which, in several of the late skirmishes the enemy had had the advantage, although that advantage was trifling. He now came forward with sixteen pieces of artillery, and a strong reinforcement of Hottentots, to settle the question. The English were resolute in maintaining their position, and the night previous to the attack was by both parties employed in preparing for the morrow. At daylight, everything was bustle and activity; and each moment was a moment of anxious suspense. The soldiers, accustomed to the scenes of preparation, seemed to consider the affair as one of an ordinary nature; whilst the seamen betrayed the utmost anxiety to rid themselves of the worst part of a battle—the expectation of it—by immediately commencing hostilities.

No attack was made. General Craig, who was well aware of the intention of the enemy, wondered at the delay; but the Irish sentinel soon explained the cause.

'Come forward, is it you mean, your honour? It's not Slyskin who'll come forward this blessed day. He's making a starn-board already, and does not like the look of that flate in the offing.'

'Fleet in the offing!' reiterated the general.

'Flate in the offing, your honour; and where's the wonder, when they've all got

masts and sails? They are much better off the Cape, I'm thinking, than we are on it.'

The Dutch General had seen the fleet. There were no less than fourteen sail of East India ships, wonderfully resembling ships of the line, crowding all sail for the anchorage in Simon's Bay. It was perhaps more necessary now than ever for the Dutch to make their attack, and drive back the 78th Regiment and the sailors, before the attack was made on them by the increased numbers in the ships; but the tide, which generally only flows once in all affairs of war, was neglected, and each party remained on their respective grounds.

By the 14th the troops were landed, and provisioned for four days. The seamen, with their usual zeal and resolution to overcome difficulties, dragged the cannon through the heavy sand; whilst a division of the squadron weighed and ran into Temple Bay, making a diversion in the rear of the enemy.

General Clarke, resolving upon an immediate attack upon Cape Town, marched the whole force forward, as if determined to end the war at one stroke. The Dutch, seeing this dauntless front, began to retire towards Cape Town; no sooner, however, did the open bay become visible, than the detached ships of the squadron were seen entering it. With a powerful enemy in front, a harassing foe in the rear, and his men wavering from a knowledge of the surrounding position of the British forces, the Dutch General asked for forty-eight hours to settle the terms of capitulation.

Time is uselessly allowed when one party are at the gates, and those inside first offer the flag of truce. It was evident from the request of General Sluysken that he was checkmated; and Clarke, who was anxious to secure the enemy, now within his grasp, allowed only twenty-four hours for the terms of capitulation.

Half that time would have been sufficient. All the parade and nonsense of garrisons walking out with their flags flying and arms displayed, is like giving a child a sugar-plum to prevent its crying. There is no fear of an enemy being baked and eaten by the victors; and what difference can it make if a garrison lays down its arms and surrenders outside of a town, or if they surrender at once, when all retreat is cut off, and all chance of defence gone? It is a little bit of the humbug of war, left from bygone days, as ear-rings and necklaces are the remnants of savage life.

Thus fell the town and colony into the hands of Great Britain; and as the General had refused to put it under the *protection* of the British government, the latter took the liberty of taking it altogether, and they have very carefully maintained so eligible a position ever since.

When, after millions had been slain that Napoleon might stand on the top of the pillar in the Place Vendôme, still looking down upon the nation he once made great, and the balance of power was held in the false hands of diplomacy, the different conquests for which Great Britain had fought and bled were again restored to the different nations from which they had been wrested, the Cape, with one or two other important places, were retained; and throughout the whole war it would be difficult to name a more important situation, which fell into our hands.

There had been but very trifling fighting in the reduction of the Cape, and the army under General Alured Clarke had suffered very inconsiderably; but there were some killed and some wounded. Amongst the latter was a tall, well-looking young man, who had received a flesh-wound in the leg, and lay on the ground waiting to be carried like a gentleman, instead of hopping on one leg, like a school-boy at play.

Bowling, seeing this officer in no very comfortable situation, called two or three of his men, and desired them to lift the gentleman carefully, and convey him to his tent, which was near at hand; whilst he ordered another seaman to run for the surgeon who had been landed from the *America*.

'You are not much hurt, I hope, sir?' said Bowling.

'Not much,' replied the officer, with an especial dandy intonation; 'the ball has passed through the calf of my leg, and will be, I fear, detrimental to exertion during the shooting season.'

'That's the season, your honour,' said the Irishman, who seemed to be, like his countryman's bird, in two places at once, 'that's just over, and which, bad luck to it! spoilt the calf of your honour's leg.' Then, calling to a comrade, he added, 'Tim, go to the gen'leman's head, you're the strongest of the party; it will take eight of us to lift the length of him, not to mention his honour's boots. Aisy, boys, aisy; kape his head up. Now then, lads, lift handsomely together, and away we go to the tent. Tim, you butcher's baby you! make a circumbendibus, and let the gen'leman put his best foot forward; you would not let him go into the tent, sure, like an ox to the shambles, headforemost?'

'I think the less you talk, Mr. Irishman,' said the officer, 'and the more you work, the better; and I'll trouble you to walk as evenly as you can.'

'Gently, boys, gently; his honour ain't accustomed to horse-exercise—you see he's no spurs to his boots. By my soul, here's the doctor with as many knives as would cut up the salt junk for the dinner of a frigate's ship's company! Your honour had better be put on the table at once; he's the cleverest man in the universal world, and you'll be fit for Chelsea in ten minutes.'

The officer was placed, from preference, on a cot which was on the ground, the amputation table, at which Paddy in revenge had hinted, not being at all in accordance with his views.

'What is the matter?' said the surgeon, as he approached.

'Nothing particular, your honour,' interrupted Paddy. 'The gen'leman's got a shooting season in his leg.'

The wound was examined; the ball had passed, as the officer said, right through, leaving a flesh-wound of little or no importance, save the temporary pain, the confinement, and, above all, the necessary abstinence, which must result before a cure could be effected.

Bowling's party having been commanded back to their ships, in order to get the squadron into Table Bay, he was on his march before the officer had been placed in his tent; and on the Irish seaman rejoining him, he was sent back to attend upon the wounded gentleman, and on his removal to bring down to Table Bay the cot and other articles. The officer would just as soon have seen the devil as the Irishman; but he soon learned to appreciate the kind-hearted fellow, who, although he was not sparing of his words, was ever ready to go through any fatigue to comfort the officer, notwithstanding that he was as fretful under the necessary restraint and confinement as a newly-caged canary-bird.

'What's your name?' said the officer, rather hastily.

'It's Patrick O'Leary, to be sure, as if all the flate did not know *that;* and now could your honour be afther returning the compliment, by informing me of your own beautiful name?'

The officer smiled as he said, 'I am Captain Augustus Cæsar Cornish.'

'Holy Father!' said O'Leary, in an Irish whisper, 'here's names enough to beat the Dutch Governor, anyhow!'

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH SOME TROPICAL AMUSEMENTS ARE SHOWN TO THE READER.

CAPTAIN AUGUSTUS CÆSAR CORNISH was not in mourning when he arrived at the Cape. He was supposed to be a single man; and, from his own confessions, generally wheedled out of him with considerable ease, was with the women one of the most successful men in England. For this qualification he certainly possessed many requisites; and his commanding figure made him an especial favourite with the majority of the sex.

The heat of the Cape was likely to draw out some of his rosiness, whilst the mosquitoes always fed luxuriantly during the time he remained in the tent, situated on the sand, from which, at sunset, these tormenting devils rise by thousands. Bowling had no mosquito-curtains; he had few luxuries, but plenty of the requisites for war; and Patrick O'Leary, in answer to a question from the wounded captain, as to what kind of a man his master could be to do without curtains, replied, 'By my faith, your honour, the captain's a man very fond of music!'

If all the annoyances of tropical climates were heaped together, what an encouragement it would be for young men of good fortune to emigrate, and leave the luxuries of England, in the great cause of serving their country! The weakening heat of the day passed, the partially revived exile sits down to dinner. No sooner has the steam of the soup arisen to the beams above, than down comes a cockroach into the savoury mess, and away goes the soup untasted. No living creature but a mongoose can relish a cockroach; and cockroach Madeira is a bestiality at which point few can arrive. The continued dance of St. Vitus, occasioned by the incessant bites of those tiny blood-suckers, the mosquitoes, keeps the healthy part of the company in a fever of excitement; whilst along the beams myriads of ants—insects which sometimes take the liberty of attempting to colonize the stranger's person—swarm above the head, and crawl along the decks.

Suddenly a rush, like the noise of many winds is heard; it is a flight of amatory cockroaches, attracted by the light—they fly with the rapidity of partridges—the candles are extinguished—the nasty things stick in the hair of your head—fly against your face—get inside of the waistcoat, and all—ay, every idea of the most common comfort, is in a moment put to flight. Half starved, from the inroad of the harpies, who defy extinction, and who increase and multiply and replenish the ship in spite of the most revengeful warfare waged against them by every boy in her, who each morning is obliged to muster with a certain, not insignificant number of either the insects or their eggs, the exhausted exile seeks oblivion in the luxury of sleep: he walks the deck of his cabin for a moment without slippers, to cool his feverish feet. The enemy, ever watchful, at once seizes his opportunity. The jigger fastens itself upon the skin; it digs its way through the outer cuticle; it establishes an habitation, as rabbits burrow in the earth, and fearful indeed are the consequences of allowing these intruders to remain unmolested—amputation has been sometimes resorted to, and mortification has more than once ensued. With this enemy, who so cautiously attacks his victim that he is perfectly unconscious of his harbouring such a foe, the bed is resorted to; and there, even in spite of O'Leary's music, the exhausted

man believes himself partially relieved from the unceasing annoyances of the day.

The feeble light of the sentinel's lantern enables him to discern something black just over his face; his weary eyes can only discover that it moves. The man, overcome by lassitude, dozes; and something falls upon his face. He rises at the unwelcome salute; but whatever it might have been, it has disappeared. To sleep again, he again closes his heavy eyes; but a curious sensation, resembling a scratch and a tickle, disturbs him once more. He feels something which crawls up his arm, having found a cheerful warmth by making its way to the skin through the opening at the wrist; hastily unbuttoning the wristband, he turns up his sleeve in some dismay—and there, cased in its saffron mail, the long centipede, dragging with it its hundred feet, is seen pursuing its slow pace towards the neck. If it stops even for a second, it bites—and then come pain and aches which would defy the leaden power of sleep.

With cautious but trembling hand he flips the nasty vermin from his skin; but there it still is, alive, and crawling in his cabin, and may, before the night is past, mount the bulkhead, and, crawling along the beam, again be attracted by the heat, and again endeavour to nestle on his arm. The mosquitoes, in the meantime, buzz about his ears, and not unfrequently, as if determined to be noticed, force themselves within the entrance. The cockroaches crawl, the ants creep, and all nature seems alive, whilst man solicits repose. A strange sail is reported at daylight: ever alive to the service, the anxious officer jumps from his cot—he encases himself in his clothes—he thrusts his foot into his shoe; a sharp sting soon obliges him to retreat; he shakes the shoe to find the hidden enemy, when out falls a green scorpion, and, curling his tail aloft, as if in defiance, and showing itself ready for attack though eager for retreat, the poisonous reptile skims along the deck. Then follow all the effects of the venom—'A bolt of ice runs hissing through the veins, and now again he burns;' the tongue is quickly projected and returned to the mouth; an excruciating pain shoots up the leg, fever instantly attacks the patient; and whilst occupied in remedying the evil in one foot, the crafty jigger, or chigoes, is enlarging its habitation; — innumerable eggs are deposited, and a growing and a serious malady is gaining ground.

Does he, to avoid these annoyances, seek the shore—alas! they are all bred on shore. It is but a colony that has emigrated: the mother country swarms with unhealthy population. If to cool himself he tries the water, the greedy shark, the terrific alligator, the sword, cat, dog, and pikefish, are all on the look-out to attack him. He turns to the shady grove—the speckled snake is everywhere in his path; the viper hangs from the tree; the venomous spider descends as it spins its attenuated web; the fleas, flies, mosquitoes, ants, wasps, hornets—a myriad of moving devils—hunt him from his repose, and make even the yellow fever insignificant.

To a man who has basked in luxury on the happy shore where all the most serious of these annoyances and dangers are unknown, the knowledge of the enemies amongst which he is destined to live makes his life one of care and uneasiness. Some indeed have been frightened at the descriptions, and died of their fears—others have returned in the packet which conveyed them to the unhealthy shores; and some, eager to avoid the calamity, have had recourse to precautions which have suddenly failed, and ultimately proved their worst enemy. It requires a man of some nerve calmly to bear these evils; the fretful predispose themselves to fever; and the idle loiterer in the sun, or the moon's rays, courts the malady.

After Cape Town had fallen, and all the nonsense and parade of the surrender had been gone through, Cornish was placed in a cart, drawn by bullocks—a most uncomfortable carriage for an invalid, being so very rough and slow in its motions—and was conveyed to a convenient house, for which he paid a handsome rent. Money was no object; he had plenty of that most requisite article. And now, placed on a comfortable couch, overlooking Table Bay, he enjoyed all the luxuries of his new habitation. In his usual forgetfulness, or rather ingratitude, he had never even asked the name of the captain who had lent him his tent and his servant. As Captain Bowling had quite enough to do without wasting his time on morning visits, he allowed a fortnight to pass without encumbering the patient with any more of his attentions.

At the termination of this time, the officers of the army proposed to give a grand dinner to their worthy coadjutors in arms. The utmost harmony prevailed between the two services, and an entertainment of this kind was not likely to lessen it. Cornish was resolved to be present; indeed, there was no reason why he should not: his wound was sufficiently well to enable him to walk, and common temperance was all that his medical adviser required.

It was a grand spread; the table was honoured by the attendance of General Sluysken, and all the captains of the East India ships then in the bay. The army, the navy, foreigners, civilians, and captains, all were present; and certainly on that occasion no one could complain of the want of liberality in the donors of the feast. The best wines were sent from the ships—English mutton was also provided in capital order; and, in short, everything from turtle to yams decorated the table.

No man looked more at his ease than General Sluysken. He sat on the right of General Clarke, and on the left of the admiral. His government had passed from him—all his honours and glories had faded away; the old man had changed from governor to captive, yet nothing could rob him of his cheerfulness. He had done as much as could have been expected from him; he had yielded when all resistance was useless, and with that composure that a brave man ever experiences, he regarded his captors. Bowling looked at him with admiration; and in his manner observed the greatness of his mind. Cornish was astonished that he should condescend to show himself before his conquerors as a kind of wild beast exhibition. This soldier, although brave, for no one ever doubted the animal courage of Cornish, had not that high opinion of moral courage which marks the superior man. Cornish would have sunk under what he would have called the disgrace of the defeat, or have died in making an useless resistance, surrounded by his gallant band, who might have said, as the French Guard at Waterloo, 'We may die—but we will never surrender.' He might have won golden opinions from some, in perilling the blood of his soldiers when the battle was won; but men who judge differently, and who draw a just line between bravery and desperation, would censure, and properly censure, the useless waste of life that must have ensued, had he continued an obstinate resistance. When Sluysken's health was drunk, and every officer, out of respect for the former Governor, rose as he offered the toast, he made a reply in which the above argument was the groundwork of his speech; and he finished by declaring, 'The brave man knew when to surrender, and when further resistance would be criminal.'

It was the remarks which followed this speech that first elicited a conversation between Cornish and Bowling; indeed, Bowling had not recognised in the gaily-dressed Cornish the wounded man he had served. Bowling was warm in his admiration of the temper of Sluysken, and espoused his sentiments; whilst Cornish, to make the argument closer to his feelings, asked if he would not sooner his ship had sunk under his feet than surrender, as the *Vengeur* did with her crew on the 1st of June, 1794.

Bowling's reply was looked for with much interest by the younger officers of the army. He was known to them all, in spite of the benevolence so strongly marked in his countenance, to be one of the most daring fellows in the service.

'In the first place,' he said, 'sir, you have misstated the circumstance of the *Vengeur*; and most certainly nothing would tempt me to imitate so bad an example.'

'Bad an example!' interrupted Cornish: 'why she went down with her crew on board, and they, waving the tricoloured flag, even as the ship was disappearing, shouted, "Vive la republique!" The action was fought only last year, and we are all acquainted with the *facts*.'

'I should think not,' said Bowling coolly; 'and, for one, I am quite sure *you* are not acquainted with the facts.'

'Sir!' exclaimed Cornish.

'Sir,' said Bowling, as he quietly placed on his plate a piece of pine-apple, 'suppose you give me time to state *my* facts before I state my sentiments. The *Vengeur*, it is true, was sunk in Lord Howe's action, and it is equally true that the French flag was waved as she sank; but you have forgotten to state, that so far from this being a proof of determined resistance to the last, it was merely the exhibition of a few men, all totally unconscious of danger by their being drunk, and that over their heads was an English flag waving in the breeze, which their comrades had hoisted as a proof of surrender, and as a signal for assistance; that, so far from the crew being at all anxious for the unenviable distinction you have so lavishly bestowed, not more than fifteen men, and they were too intoxicated to avail themselves of the chance of escape, sank in the ship. Captain Reverdin and all his crew, with the exception of the fifteen, availed themselves of the first opportunity, and saved themselves.* Now these are *my facts;* and in answer to the question put to me as to what I should have preferred, I answer, that when resistance is vain, it becomes criminal, as the General said in his speech, and no man has a right, from a false feeling of honour, to sacrifice the lives of brave men, who gallantly defend themselves as long as resistance is attended with any hope of escape or conquest. When you cannot save the ship, she is lost under every circumstance, but the crew may be saved to serve their country again, perhaps with better success.'

'I really cannot agree with you,' said Cornish; 'I really cannot.'

'Perhaps not; but allow me to ask you one question. When I found you the other day lying wounded on the sand, unable to move from loss of blood, perfectly helpless as to the smallest resistance, if I, instead of being your friend had been your foe, and had come raging with fury to destroy all I could of my enemies, would you have said, "By

* There is a fine painting by a Monsieur Léon Morel Fatio, in the Louvre, on this subject; he has fallen into a complication of errors. The *Vengeur* is sinking with at least five hundred men on board. The ship is perfectly dismasted, and no English flag is seen: but on the poop there are about two hundred persons, all pointing to a tricoloured flag, and all going down with the greatest possible satisfaction. He has been misled by the author of 'Les Victoires et Conquêtes,' who is as erroneous in his description as the artist.

all means stick me, poke me through and through with that long pike ; put me like a frog upon a spit ; make a kabob of me ; transfix me on a skewer to be fried"? or would you have said, "I surrender, spare my *life?*"'

'I take this to be personal, decidedly personal ; and I am at a loss to imagine how I have drawn on myself such an insult.'

'Insult,' said Bowling, good-humouredly, 'that is rather too good. You ask me a question, and I answer it in a straightforward manner. I put the same question to you, and you shelter yourself under the assumption of an offence you must know I never could have intended.'

'*Shelter !*' said Cornish, to a young ensign close to him ; 'by Jove, he said shelter ! As if a man got under an umbrella to shelter himself from the attack of the rain, or behind a tree to shelter himself from a storm. By the Lord Harry, he shall never say I sheltered myself from him. You will be my friend, of course. These young captains of cockle shells are mighty bumptious, and require some bleeding.'

Bowling caught just enough of the words to comprehend their meaning ; and although he was the braver man of the two, and possessed more coolness and discretion, he took no notice of the expressions whatever ; but, turning to the president, asked permission to give a toast. The president gave his consent, and Bowling rose.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH ARE TWO MORE SONGS FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF THE PUBLIC, AND TWO OLD ACQUAINTANCES GET UP A LITTLE AMUSEMENT FOR THEMSELVES.

'MR. PRESIDENT,' said Bowling (as he in reality began his *first* speech, and might have continued with 'unaccustomed as I am to public speaking,') 'I feel a little alarmed even at the pleasure I had anticipated in proposing the toast which you have kindly given me permission to offer ; but it is a toast I feel confident will be received by us all—all, *I hope*,' (he repeated, looking towards Cornish, whose upper lip was turned up with a sneer, whilst his whole countenance betokened the hope he entertained that the speaker would break down), 'with the sincerity it is offered. In all great undertakings, Mr. President, where the union of the two services is requisite, there is nothing tends so much to the success of the enterprise as a good and proper understanding between every officer engaged in it. In these times envy and jealousy should be laid aside ; we should all be prompted by one determination, that of acting in concert, so that success may not be endangered by any ill-feeling. If there had been dissension amongst us, could we ever have hoped to have overcome that gallant and excellent officer on your right, even had our force been more numerous, and we had been enabled to hem him in on every side? Had we not acted in concert, his gallantry, and talent in availing himself of every favourable event, might have occasioned a very different result. As in public, so may it ever be in private life,—may the two services (I mean no disrespect to that gallant and enterprising corps, the marines, in which we both merge)—may the two services, Mr. President, ever be united in friendship and cordiality ; and may no jealousy sever us in public, or any hasty expression promote discord in private life. Mr. President, I give, with your permission, "The Union of the Services." '

It was perfectly impossible even for the fire-eating Captain Cornish to pretend not to understand the application of the toast, and the delicate manner in which Bowling had held out the hand of reconciliation in his reference to the union of the services in private life. He was, however, in high dudgeon, and would, had not the stream of applause been too strong for him to contend against, have manifested a kind of parliamentary disapprobation of the sentiments. The president himself returned thanks for the toast ; and, in conclusion, gave 'The Navy.' It is customary on such occasions for every officer of the other service to name every officer of the profession present, and to say, 'Your health.' This was the touchstone on which to test Cornish's intention ; and he, mad that his adversary had obtained some notice from all, most studiously omitted Bowling.

Bowling saw the storm brewing ; and as he could not reach the friendly port to which he had attempted to steer, he shortened sail to meet the squall with coolness whenever it might attack him.

In the meantime the senior officers retired with the Governor, and left the entertainment to be carried on by the younger men, all of whom, with the exception of one, were in very high spirits, and in capital humour. It might have been supposed that the room was an area for the practice of public speaking ; for, as the wine circulated freely, the imaginations of many of the company got a little confused, and arrived at that pitch when the speaker has a thousand brilliant ideas, but the words become clogged together, the idea escapes before it can be expressed, and twenty speeches were begun without one being properly terminated.

There were several Dutch officers present at the beginning of the feast ; but as they could not understand the language when the speakers were sober, they felt they were now only wet blankets over the fire of conviviality, and retired. The president, who had superseded General Clarke in the chair, availed

himself of this opportunity of withdrawing, and it became necessary to elect another to fill the situation.

There was a very cheerful expression of countenance about Bowling. He had naturally high spirits, and his dark eye flashed with delight at any witticism. In his youth he had drunk enough of stronger liquor than claret to accustom him to take a very large quantity of that wine without getting inebriated. He was known to sing a good song, that is as far as the music was concerned, the words being always his own, and the subject nearly the same. Everyone seemed to look at him, and there was a simultaneous desire expressed that he should fill the chair. Many persons present were aware he had stepped up the ladder by his own exertions, and the gallant manner in which he captured the fort at Martinique had been of course mentioned by his officers, who felt a pride in serving under a man so distinguished for his bravery. Cornish, when he saw his enemy thus promoted by the company, rose to withdraw; but one or two of his regiment, who carried sail with some difficulty, held him firmly by the arm, and desired him not to leave a society to the pleasures of which he could so largely contribute.

'By the Lord Harry, Apollo!' said one of them, 'we will have half-a-dozen songs out of you, and we shall have a grand account of all the girls who have been desperately in love with you, from the first Fanny to your black-eyed Susan in Devonshire. There's no fun without you, so, as our friend in the chair would say, bring yourself to an anchor.'

Bowling distinctly heard the mention of black-eyed Susan in Devonshire; and although there might have been some hundreds of Susans, all with black eyes and all residing in Devonshire, the name awakened in him some very uncomfortable feelings in regard to Cornish. The latter gentleman was perfectly cool and sober; for throughout the whole evening, when others had become a little excited and, after numerous toasts had been drunk, a little bordering on the uproarious, Cornish, for once in his life, had kept steady and been reflective. He saw before him his brave companions in arms, no longer under the fear of restraint; but, the bridle being removed, they galloped in unrestrained liberty.

In all dinner-parties of this kind, there are some of the company who forget their situations as officers, and become, in a trifling degree, loose and disorderly; and now, even in spite of Bowling's presidential restraint, the song and the anecdote got adrift and became *loose*. Bowling sang the first strain. In all his songs the heart seemed resting on a distant hope; and although he had cheered up, in bygone days, the roughest sailor on the Saturday night by some allusion to gales and battles, yet even in the very first songs he had written there was always a lurking after Susan, and in every one he had ever penned, her name was in some part of the verse. He sang the following to the tune of 'When at war on the ocean we meet the proud foe:'—

'When the wind swells the canvas, and strong is the breeze
Which drives our brave ship o'er the far-distant seas;
If we see but a speck on the ocean's white foam,
We think of old England—we think of our home.

'For there, in that island, the pride of the brave,
Whose flag rides in triumph o'er every wave—
Who is great in her court, in her camp, in her mart—
There dwells the fond maiden, the pride of my heart.

'O, grant me, kind Heaven! that girl for a wife,
Whilst the sun-rise of health gives me vigour and life:
And constant I'll be from the day that I wed,
For Susan, dear Susan, shall pillow my head.'

'That's not a bad song,' said the young officer who had detained Cornish; 'it seems odd, though, that both sailors and soldiers should all tumble in love with Susans. I say, Apollo, my boy, what is the other name of your Susan? Yours is "*The Susan*," for yours is a reality. Captain Bowling's, I fancy, is a poet's imagination.'

'Not quite,' said Bowling, 'not quite. I have seen a girl of that name, but it's many years ago. It's more than eight years since I put my foot on the English shore; so that whether my Susan has grown up as pretty as she promised to be, or has made a stretch on the other tack, and skimmed along the ugly shore, are points on which I am in total ignorance.'

'I *do* know a Susan,' said Cornish, with most particular emphasis, 'and I flatter myself she knows me. There never was a prettier girl born in old England; and as far as black eyes are good towards making a handsome woman, with smooth, glossy, raven hair—the most even and white teeth—features as regular as if they were chiselled by that old Greek (I always forget his name)—with a smile upon her cherry lips, and good humour on her features—with a figure as beautiful as was ever created for the admiration of man, I know her to be exquisitely lovely; and, poor girl, I think I may add, without incurring the imputation of flattery, my absence is not congenial to her wishes.'

'Don't get Cornish in his loves, or we shall never hear another song,' interrupted a veteran captain, whose bent had long since been fixed upon promotion rather than on woman. 'Let's have "Corporal Scamp."'

The young man thus called upon for the song was the friend of Cornish, but as different from him as light from darkness, a kind of proof that extremes *do* meet. With

a good-humoured acquiescence he filled his glass, and sang the following rather opposite opinion to the one expressed in Bowling's song :—

'Corporal Scamp, Corporal Scamp,
Was the greatest rogue in all the camp,
If he saw pass by
A dark black eye,
Or if it was blue, or a lighter shade,
Scamp tried for a kiss from the pretty maid.

'It chanced one day, as he happened to stray,
He met a nun who was running away.
All hooded in black,
She never looked back;
So Scamp caught the fugitive round the waist,
And softly whispered, "Why in such haste?"

'She never spoke, but away she broke,
Without once deigning to cast a look:
Her course she bent
To an officer's tent,
Who was teaching recruits to "shoulder arms,"—
Who forgot his love in his war's alarms.

'The corporal's feet were nearly as fleet,
His heart and his pulse were at fever heat:
It's youth's pretty face
That can run such a pace.
"Hark, hark!" cried the figure, "I hear the tramp,
The coming step, of that Corporal Scamp."

'He entered the tent, and at once he went
To gratify his heart's content;
The hood's thrown back—
He gave her a smack—
Then he bit his lips, and he cursed his life;
The amorous nun was—the corporal's wife!'

'Hah, hah, hah!' laughed the old captain. 'That's just the reason I never married. I should always be afraid of kissing my wife by mistake.'

'Or of her kissing another,' said Cornish. 'For Susan, dear Susan, shall pillow my head,' he hummed aloud. 'Rather pretty that; sentimental withal; and most especially in accordance with my feelings!'

'Who the devil is this Susan?' said the old captain. 'I fancy, Cornish, you are like Corporal Scamp, after every pretty girl in your parish.'

'Oh, she is nobody of any birth, parentage, or education. She tumbled from the clouds, I believe, and was taken, as a matter of charity, as a companion to a sick young lady; a kind of pretty piece of furniture, when worn out to be changed or discharged, or hired at discretion; a piece of sticking-plaster, when it has served its destined turn, to be thrown aside; a——'

'Oh Lord!' interrupted the veteran; 'she's like a woman, isn't she?'

'Yes; and a prettier woman than Susan Monckton does not exist.'

'Sir!' said Bowling, 'who did you mention?'

'Who?' replied Cornish (who, having nursed his hatred for Bowling, was quite pleased at the prospect of ripping up an old quarrel, or establishing a new one), 'why Susan Monckton, the companion of Rosa Talbot; the paid attachée to her petticoat; and a young woman I have honoured by my protection.'

So completely was Bowling overcome by the heaps of insults thus lavishly, thus unexpectedly thrown upon his own Susan, that he remained perfectly silent. He felt a cold shiver run over him, and was on the point of leaving the chair, when he was recalled to his duty by a rather intoxicated cornet proposing 'The health of Susan Monckton,' Cornish's beauty.

A general cheer followed the proposition, for in Susan Monckton all the sex was included; and this toast, 'Women,' is and was, ever since the army of England has existed, the toast best received; for as none but the brave deserve the fair, and all soldiers are presumed to be brave, it followed that they only drank what they deserved. The evening was setting in for a *wet* night; a vast number had already begun to speak rather thick; one young gentleman was getting sentimentally lachrymose; another was beginning to make very indifferent puns, and nearly fell into hysterics as he laughed aloud; but all were sober enough to drink their favourite toast in a brimmer, the rose in the middle attesting that the glass would not hold a drop more without running over. Even Bowling, who was now a very respectable imitation of inebriety, inasmuch as he could not bring his mind to any subject, mechanically filled his glass.

'Women!' he exclaimed.

'Susan Monckton!' said Cornish, aloud; and scarcely had the glass touched the lips of Bowling ere it fell from his hand, and he most unceremoniously deserted his post—ran to his boat—and, having gained the *Echo*, retired to his cabin to brood over his misfortunes.

CHAPTER XX.

IN WHICH OUR HERO MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH A CELEBRATED FIGHTING DOCTOR, WHOM HE CONVERTS INTO A FATHER CONFESSOR.

NEVER was a man in a more furious humour than Bowling, and never did man better control his temper, when he mounted the side of the *Echo*.

The officer of the watch could not have observed the slightest variation in his captain. The order was given to hoist the boat up with as much coolness as usual; some remark was made as to the beauty of the night; and then the captain leisurely walked below.

Alone, all the torments of jealousy assailed him. The tone, the manner of Cornish had given him the greatest reason to credit him; for, although one or two allusions had been

made to the art 'of drawing the long bow,' nothing which had been said could have impressed the unsuspicious sailor with any want of confidence in his rival's assertions. Besides, Susan had never mentioned the name of Cornish in any of her letters, although she had mentioned Rosa Talbot.

In one of those sudden bursts to which jealous men are subject, Bowling resolved to give up all love for the faithless girl. He tore up some new songs, in which, as usual, the only name he ever cared to mention was written; he destroyed a long letter to her, which he had begun on the equator: and swore everlasting enmity to the coxcomb he imagined to be her seducer.

It requires but little to keep a man awake in the climate in which the gallant captain was stationed. Some persons never sleep at all, but fall into a kind of half-drowsy forgetfulness, which, however, is a bad substitute for the refreshing vigour of a sound repose. The wine acted its part in producing a fever; and the next morning Bowling was in the doctor's list, bled, blistered, and physicked.

A man with the health Bowling usually enjoyed soon throws off trifling attacks. You may try the Brownonian system, and cure them by excitement; or leave Nature alone, and she will beat the doctors by a fortnight; but when the mind continues in the highest stage of fever, the doctor labours in vain, and Nature appears to lose all her healing power. The choicest drugs of the dispensary, made as palatable as possible for a captain's taste, and the most delicate saline mixtures, cooled to refresh his parched lips, seemed of little avail. Bowling was evidently suffering from a concealed cause, which the doctor could not fathom.

In ships of war, the doctor is not expected to hold the power usually possessed by the medical practitioner on shore. There, the patient frequently unburthens his mind to his adviser with considerable relief; but in the navy the doctor seldom sits by the sick man's bed, and has but few opportunities of confidential conversation with him.

'Do you think, doctor,' said Bowling, 'I am ill enough to invalid?'

'There is no difficulty, sir,' replied the surgeon, 'in a captain's invaliding. The admiral will have no hesitation in promoting the first on the admiralty list; but I hope you are not serious, sir, as I am sure it would be a matter of serious regret to the officers and ship's company.'

'I should like,' said Bowling, not noticing the compliment, 'to return to England; to give up the service; to live on shore; in short, to go to the devil anyhow.'

The doctor saw that his patient's fever was aggravated or sustained by some mental cause; and being much too straightforward a fellow to attempt to wheedle it out by any circumlocution, he at once remarked:

'I see, Captain Bowling, you have something upon your mind which annoys you, and which you must get rid of if you want to get well. I do not want to know any of your secrets; but it is my duty to tell you that you only increase your disorder by allowing such an influence to act upon it. If I were numbered amongst your *friends*, I should pursue another line of argument.'

'You would do me an especial favour, doctor if you would be to me a friend in my present emergency, and you would likewise confer an obligation upon me by declaring yourself my friend.'

'Why, Captain Bowling, you are every man's friend; fore and aft the ship from stem to stern, every one likes you—nay, every one seems inclined to follow you to Davy Jones, though it is to be hoped there is no prospect of your seeking so unpromising an acquaintance; and as I enrol myself amongst the volunteers, I *must* be a friend to wish to proceed with you so far.'

The captain held out his feverish hand, and the doctor, having felt the dry, burning palm, gave it a squeeze and popped it into the cot. 'Now, sir,' he began, 'as the boatswain remarked to the man going to be hanged, "get the ballast out of the hold of your conscience, and you'll be as light as a feather."'

Bowling then made love's confession to the doctor, who being a man much addicted to study, and who never had a moment unemployed, was rather at a loss to comprehend the fine feeling most exquisitely (because naturally) described by Bowling. He listened very attentively to a description of the dinner scene, from which moment the malady had begun.

'To tell you the truth, Captain Bowling,' said the doctor, 'I never was in love in my life, excepting occasionally with a potato when we had nothing but salt junk, and now and then with a girl one may chance to see with a pretty face after a long cruise. I am like a first lieutenant well employed, no idle time to fall in love. So that as far as regards all those fine feelings about "absence, hope of return," and so forth; all I know of them is this, that I always was very fond of being absent from my creditors, and never wished to return until they were dead, or the statute of limitation out; but as to the other part, I can understand that, and if any man said he was the protector of the girl I fancied, it would require a suit of Richard's armour to protect his back from my stick. That's your affair. Now, sir, a friend's office is to do the most unfriendly thing in the world—offer advice: if it is not taken, the friend's insulted; if it is, the other is under an obligation; but I release you of that beforehand, as I know you will follow it. Let us just look back on your life, and then let us look forward.

'You are from your own exertions an officer of known valour and talent in the service;

you have made friends who are as sure of distinguishing themselves as that an opportunity offers; and in our profession a man must be out of luck to be out of danger. Well, here you are, sir, in the Jacob's ladder of promotion; we cannot see the end of it, it is so high above our heads, and you, with a firm foot and resolute hand, have gone up some of the rounds. I don't care a straw about your love, sir; that's your own affair. If you invalid, what will be the consequence? You will go home; long before you get there you will be as strong as a full-grown Hercules; you will devour all the cold meat in the larder of the George Inn before you have been on shore half-an-hour; you will go to the Admiralty; they will see before them a man in excellent health, and they will—for they are not very nice as to terms—quietly set you down as a man not fit to be employed, as you skulk from a climate.'

'Doctor,' said the captain, 'what the devil do you mean by "skulk"?'

'I am your friend, sir,—your chosen friend; and I do my duty as such. Listen—there are hundreds of young ambitious men with interest ready to occupy your place. You have none but with men actively employed afloat, and on foreign stations. Who is to get you confirmed in your present rank? The Admiralty will not do that whilst you are on half-pay; and the interest required for that now, would be expended in getting you afloat again,—and afloat you would come under any circumstances. If you found out this everlasting paragon of perfection to have been false to you, you would rush to sea to get rid of yourself; if you married her, you would come to sea to get rid of her.'

Here the captain held up both hands; but the doctor stopped his chance of cutting in with a positive negative by continuing the conversation.

'It's as true as the gospel, captain; I know a dozen people, all of whom are married, and have come to sea again out of pure patriotism; but although they always talked loudly of the beauty of the little isle, the charm of domestic society, the delight of being surrounded by their children, hardly one of whom had shoes and stockings; when it came to their turn to go home, even from the West Indies, the coast of Africa, or a cruise off Java, bless you, the country always required their services, and they gave away half their savings to exchange into another ship, preferring the "bloody war and sickly season" to the charms of domestic retirement. The Admiralty ought to have the power of refusing its consent to an officer's marrying until he was fifty, then the sooner he marries the better, as that will take his pride down, and leave him as much of the gentleman as the service requires. No, no, sir; you must not invalid; you must not mention the word, or the surveying officers would be on board before the cabin was ready for their reception. Your invaliding certificate would be signed before you mention half of your sensations, and you would find yourself ordered a passage in a transport, and perhaps learn French in a prison before you could get so much as a glance at your paragon.'

'Lord, doctor,' said Bowling, with a smile, 'pray ring for some claret and water, you must be very dry. However, you have made me sensible of my error, and I shall not invalid.'

'To tell you the truth, Captain Bowling, I never intended you should; for as the application to the admiral must have been signed by me, I had long ago made up my mind not to do it; for, as your friend, I would never consent to your ruin.'

'But what am I to do with this everlasting nuisance—this soldier?'

'I thought you were going to say "fever,"' replied the doctor, quietly. 'There's time enough for him. Get well first, and you can shoot him afterwards, if you really think it worth your while; for my own part, I am in ignorance what good could be gained by such a proceeding. If she is guilty, shooting the captain will not make her innocent; and if she is not guilty, I do not see the necessity of your getting shot.'

'But I must revenge the insult offered to her name.'

'Not at all, sir; change her name to Bowling, and there's an end of that.'

'And then give up the service?'

'Not the least idea of it; you will be more attached to it than ever.'

'The Admiral,' said the first lieutenant, here interrupting the colloquy, 'has sent his compliments, Captain Bowling, and begs to know how you are?'

The doctor got up, and, feeling his pulse, said, 'Much better to-day—fever considerably abated.' The captain looked at him as much as to say, 'I doubt that.'

'It will be the best message you can send,' said the doctor; 'for the last three days I have seen expectant lieutenants, and curly-headed midshipmen, most anxious to hear of your health, not of your recovery. This official bulletin will relieve them from their laudable anxiety; and a little more active treatment will soon place you on deck again. I don't think sharks are more eager for a bait than midshipmen for the death of a captain; and after all, it is an old saying, that "the grave of one man is the stepping-stone of another." Now, sir, we have got over all your feelings, I will send you some saline draughts: and if the fever does not increase towards night, we shall have gained the first victory. I will follow up the success with activity, and a few days will see you convalescent.'

A vast number of the officers of the differ-

ent regiments had made it a point to inquire concerning the health of Captain Bowling; but Captain Cornish's name was certainly not amongst the number. The Irish seaman who had attended upon him had remarked this, and had said, 'Those sodgers have no more gratitude than a nigger for a thrashing. Amongst all those lobsters that come sniffing alongside for a smell of the tar-brush, that Flamingo-looking captain who stood on one leg like an adjutant bird, has never shown his precious mug, although, by St. Patrick, the captain, bless his honour, took as much care of him by leaving him under my protection, as an elephant driver does of his child, when the animal, much honour to his sagacity, is told to look after the cratur.'

Neither was the omission of civility unobserved by the doctor, who was very sincerely Bowling's friend, and who imagined he could see in this affair some previous resolution on the part of the officer to breeze up a little fracas with the friend of Susan.

In the meantime, Bowling, now constantly cheered up by the doctor, to whom he had taken a great fancy, from his off-hand, though always most scrupulously respectful, manner, progressed gradually towards convalescence. Every day, as he got better, he formed some new project of a personal rencontre with Cornish. At last he once more stood upon his deck, to the great dissatisfaction of a pale-faced lieutenant, and to the abhorrence of the first midshipman on the Admiralty list. During Bowling's illness, the commander-in-chief of the land forces had placed the colony under the permanent protection of the British flag; the admiral had contributed his aid to its security; and the expedition was about to separate—some to return, and some to go on to India. Despatches were expected from England as to the final destination of the troops and ships, and every hour a good look-out was kept for the expectant vessel. At last one was telegraphed from the heights, and the whole squadron was instantly on the alert.

'I can't sail, doctor, upon my soul, I cannot, without some explanation from Cornish. I must learn the truth of his hints, or I must insult him.'

'I cannot help thinking, sir, it is taking an unfair advantage of him; if you were to go out with him now, he might as well fire at the point of a pen-knife as at you, if you put your feather edge towards him.'

'Well, doctor, it would be fair enough with all these odds; for hang me if he could give me a flesh-wound.'

'I think I could manage this better if I could be spared for half a day. I could make his acquaintance, and get him into a line. He would tell all his love scenes; and I might dwell upon this one, and fathom the truth.'

'You can go on shore directly, doctor, if you like; you can take my gig, and order it when you please—only find out something about this matter.'

'Let me beg of you to remain quiet at present, for your health is far from restored; and the present easy fit of your clothes might convince you how unequal you are to any undertaking requiring exertion. Oh, there is the stranger well above the horizon—she will anchor long before sunset—then I hope we may be ordered to sea. Change of air will do us all good.'

'It will never do me any good until I have been paraded on shore,' said Bowling. 'I shall die of vexation and love, if I do not find out this affair!'

The vessel in the offing soon grew nearer. She was an English brig, under a crowd of sail; and before sunset she was at anchor. She had telegraphed, 'charged with despatches;' and every officer became anxious for letters, all but the crew of the *Echo*—their friends believed them in the West Indies—and they were indifferent to all but the news from England and their departure.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT GREAT TALKERS ARE UNSAFE PEOPLE; AND THAT LADIES OUGHT ONLY TO TRUST THOSE WHO ARE AS SECRET AS THE GRAVE.

THE letter Bowling had written to Susan, mentioning his departure from Martinique, without giving her any information of his destiny, had been received about a fortnight after the sailing of Cornish; and about that period the poor creature of infatuation, Rosa, died. Even to the very last, hope never forsook her. The morning of her death, when she could hardly articulate from sheer exhaustion, she mentioned her conviction that Cornish would return in six months, and that there were many happy days in store for her. Strange disease which, when plunging its victim into the grave, creates a visionary existence scarcely to be realized in the longest life.

Mrs. Talbot, although prepared for the event, and in some measure fortified against the shock, felt the loss of her child with all the anguish of a bereaved mother. There was one still left to comfort her; and well did Susan perform her duty. But there are afflictions which no attentions soothe; and in the solitary life still left to be lingered out by the mother, a settled melancholy overshadowed her in spite of the resignation she manifested.

Susan was desired to write to Cornish, mentioning the event; and with her usual goodness of heart, executed the unwilling task. She prefaced her letter by heralding the sad tidings she had to express, so as to

prepare the reader for the intelligence. She cautiously mentioned the morning's conversation, and the calm death-bed of the exhausted sufferer; then she turned to consolation; and concluded with the pious hope that God would strengthen him that he would bear with Christian fortitude the heavy blow he had experienced.

Cornish had always passed off as a single man in the regiment; the marriage had never been advertised in the papers; and as he had married for the money, without the slightest affection for the girl, it was more than probable he would bear the tidings with the most Christian-like fortitude and resignation.

The doctor had gone on shore; and as he happened to know a vast number of the officers, it was with very little difficulty he was introduced into the mess-room, where he was made personally acquainted with Captain Cornish. The latter gentleman was sitting with his legs out of the window, balancing a chair to and fro with great accuracy, and was observing the entrance of the brig into the anchorage. Cornish was rather the butt of the regiment, and was easily enticed into some of his romantic stories. He had caught the pike, weighing at least ninety pounds, a hundred times, and never varied in his anecdote, so good and faithful was his memory. He had often volunteered to hit the cockade in a cocked-hat with a rifle-ball at one hundred yards distance, as William Tell did the apple off his child's head; or whip off the rosette, if anyone would hold it in his hand. As very few were inclined to stand the chance of being shot merely to gratify the vanity of a coxcomb, there were no volunteers in so useless or so desperate a service.

When the doctor was introduced, Cornish was in the middle of the marvellous. He was at that moment shooting a fly with a rifle at eighty yards, having previously been relating his success at a fowl tied to a peg, with room enough left for him to move about. He had, in accordance with his bet, cut off the beak of the creature without touching its head;—and he was in a most communicative humour, quite pleased at his own poetical fancy, and gratified with having one new listener added to his audience; but the doctor soon beat him at his own weapons.

'I have seen,' said the doctor, with the greatest coolness, 'an American near New Orleans fix a dollar to a wall by driving a nail through it sufficiently far to hold it fast; and I have seen him retire three hundred yards, and, by hitting the head of the nail several times with a ball, drive it right through the dollar!' This exhibition of the wonderful piqued Cornish not a little; he had shot butterflies with a rifle frequently; swallows innumerable; snipes occasionally; but he had never come up to the nail and the dollar.

The doctor diminished his magnifying powers in order to give Cornish the lead; and anecdote after anecdote succeeding, it became so late that the mess-waiters began to prepare for dinner. The doctor rose to depart; but Cornish was pressing in his invitation to dinner, which, after some time, he accepted. Scarcely had the dinner concluded, when a sergeant brought in a handful of letters; two of which were handed to Cornish.

'One from pretty Susan, I'll be bound!' said the young ensign.

'Cursed bores those girls!' said the doctor; 'everlastingly writing, and everlastingly bothering for a return of affection, and an enclosure of money. I should think,' added the doctor, 'I have had as much success with the fair sex as even a man so famed for his personal appearance and fascinating manners as Captain Cornish.'

The young ensign, who enjoyed the joke, and saw through the doctor's intention of setting on the captain, immediately remarked, that if the doctor had been more successful, he was the most wonderful man alive.

During this little skirmish, Cornish had read the account of his wife's death with becoming fortitude; so well did he master his feelings, that 'no celestial tear bedimmed those large blue eyes.' He took a glass of claret—sorrow, they say, is always dry—and then proceeded to read the other despatch, which was from his father; and which, while it endeavoured to console his son for his heavy affliction, mentioned that his wife had left a will disposing of some of the property, which she had no right to do, and giving notice that he had warned the executor, who was the clergyman, and that as the will was made before the marriage, the deed was invalid. Susan Monckton was mentioned as being the person destined to inherit the money, which the old gentleman was kind enough to consider perfectly absurd.

This letter gave Cornish some trifling uneasiness, more especially as Susan had given him to understand that her heart was engaged to another, and that at any rate she was proof against all his insinuating manners. Despised or rejected love soon rankles into hatred; and with a mean and unprincipled man love never has a very strong hold.

'Well, Apollo,' said the ensign, 'has Susan written to you?'

'She has,' said Cornish, with a confident air; 'and if you like you may satisfy your eyes by seeing the signature. A curious handwriting, is it not, sir?' said Cornish, showing the doctor the signature, and at the same time giving the ensign a glimpse of it.

The doctor saw the signature, and there was no possibility of blinding himself to the

truth of Cornish's assertion. He however remarked, that the name was written in an unsteady hand, and that the paper was black-edged.

'Yes,' said Cornish, 'poor girl, she is in sad distress concerning her brother's death, and she requires some assistance, as the funeral has drained her slender resources.'

'Send her a cheque for fifty or a hundred, Apollo,' said the ensign. 'What do you care about money? And a pretty girl in grief is always a sight to draw the purse strings.'

'Very fortunately,' said Cornish, 'we are spared half the inducement by not seeing the grief; and as for women's tears, they are no index of the mind. I verily believe, if it suited her purpose, a woman could cry for twenty-four hours without ceasing. I once knew a girl who had brought herself into such excellent practice, that whenever she was getting fat she invariably cried herself into her proper figure again. No, no; I have not fifties to throw away upon one girl; and these creatures always get through the world somehow.'

'I suppose,' said the doctor, with a careless air men sometimes use when they speak of those unfortunate creatures who have sacrificed themselves, 'this Susan Monckton is one of the many you have known in your gallantry?'

'Ah, yes,' said Cornish, adjusting his stock; 'Solomon's batch, or David's establishment, was scarcely more numerous than mine. Upon my soul, though, I cannot help thinking the readiness with which these girls come in one's way highly immoral. Try this fresh bottle, doctor. Why, do you think the wine so strong that you splice it with water? Ah, there goes, as the sailors say, the commodore down the main hatchway.' (This was in allusion to the eight o'clock gun, which was fired regularly at that hour.)

'I am apprehensive that I must return on board, as my captain is rather sick, and I must attend to *him*,' said the doctor.

'That is,' said Cornish, 'Captain Bowling. A brave man, I believe; has seen some service; and always the first in danger, and last out of it. He is not a confirmed commander, I believe?'

'No; but in momentary expectation of it. It is by no means impossible that this brig may have brought out his commission; for although we left Martinique with sealed orders, of course the Admiral, Sir John Jervis, gave the Admiralty notice of our destination.'

'The other night,' said Cornish, 'he sang us a song about Susan. I should like to get it to send to the girl. I could pass it off as mine, and swear she was never out of my mind. Odd enough, too,' continued Cornish, as he amused himself with a tooth-pick, 'he seemed to know something of *my* Susan.'

'Sailors generally know,' said the doctor, 'as many Susans as would stow away in the hold of a collier. It's a fancy name with their ladies ever since "Black-eyed Susan" was written; but about the song, if you really wish it, I dare say I could manage that for you.'

'Do, doctor, do; it would save me lots of trouble; for although I am wonderfully ready at the pen, yet when not inspired, I am sluggish. I believe I have written more than twenty volumes of love songs; but they were snatched away from me so immediately, that I really have never remembered one; and here it's so infernally hot, it actually melts one's ideas. Love and poetry in hot weather would make any man dissolve into ignorance and indifference.'

'It certainly is no weather for bodily or mental exertion,' replied the doctor; 'and I should pity the man who had to walk six miles or write six verses.'

'Walk!' ejaculated Cornish, quite pleased at the idea of volunteering a brilliant invention; 'I walked from Constantinople to Paris without changing my shoes; but I would not back myself to walk half-a-mile here in the heat of the sun.'

'That's a stretcher,' said the ensign.

'You imagine it a stretcher, as you are pleased to call it; but I have often walked seventy miles on the 1st of September, and carried gun, powder, shot, and game.'

'Good-night, Captain Cornish,' said the doctor. 'I am much obliged to you for your kind entertainment, which has seduced me from my duty, for I ought to have been on board the *Echo* an hour ago; but I must plead as an excuse the pleasure of your society, the fertility of your imagination, and the brilliancy of your wit.'

'Good-night, doctor. I am sorry you are determined to go. I once kept a party for twenty-four hours in such violent laughter, that the medical man recommended them to cry for a week to restore the equilibrium.'

'Hah!' went the doctor, as he emerged into the cool night air, 'never since the time of Tom Pepper have I heard the equal of this Cornish; he has lies enough to sink a jolly-boat; and had I not seen the letter delivered, and never lost sight of it for an instant until I saw the signature, I would no more have believed it came from Susan Monckton, than I would have believed it an epistle from St. Paul of old, or the sultan of modern times. The only part I did not wish to credit is backed up with too strong a proof to admit of a doubt, and what to advise I really do not know.'

As the doctor pondered along the road which led to the landing place, he walked as most men do who think, with their heads down and their step quick. Your saunterer

only dallies with thought; it is the active man and active mind who draw most upon the thoughts. It was a beautiful night, quite clear enough to keep any man from running against a post, but not sufficiently bright to keep the doctor clear of a person who imagined all the world should get out of his way; plump came the doctor against him, and down went a captain, cocked-hat, side-arms and all. The concussion alarmed the doctor, who had been forced out of his equilibrium, and only recovered himself after one or two elongations of the arms, which served as a balance.

'Who are you, sir?' said the sprawling officer, gathering up himself and his hat.

'I am the surgeon of the *Echo*,' replied the doctor. 'I really am very sorry, sir, for this untoward event, which you must attribute to accident.'

'I attribute it, sir,' said the infuriated officer, 'to carelessness, to contempt, to a state of inebriation quite unworthy of either an officer or a gentleman, and which I shall take care to mention to the admiral.'

'As I am going directly on board of the *Echo*, sir,' said the doctor, with much gravity, 'I shall request Captain Bowling and the first lieutenant to certify that I am not in the disgraceful state you seem to insinuate; and as I apologised for an accident which certainly was no more my fault than your own, I beg to withdraw those expressions, and leave you to your own remedy.'

'You ought to have got out of *my* way, sir,' said the proud man.

'You ought not to have got *in* mine,' quietly answered the doctor.

'The service is going to the devil,' said the captain, 'when warrant officers are permitted to remain on shore at such hours.'

'The devil,' quietly resumed the doctor, 'will have a choice collection of commissioned officers.' He then took off his hat with a most respectful bow, and was about to depart, when the captain assured him that to-morrow he should make a formal complaint to the admiral and to Captain Bowling, of the want of respect he had experienced from his inferior officer.

The doctor mildly remarked that he could not control the actions or disposition of the captain, but begged to remind him that he had accused him of being in a state of intoxication, and that although it was moonlight, he could not be expected to see the rank of the officer, more especially as he wore a cloak.

'A mild answer turneth away wrath:' not always. The captain continued his walk, muttering maledictions, not loud, but deep. The doctor stepped into his boat, having perfectly forgiven the insults he had received, and thinking more of his patient and his friend than the silly fellow with whom he had just parted.

Bowling had waited for the doctor with great impatience; and on his reporting himself returned, he was instantly asked what intelligence had been received. The doctor, who never allowed his feelings to get the better of his discretion, begged Captain Bowling particularly to remark if he was in the least degree intoxicated; and having mentioned the late occurrence, he further begged that the officer of the watch might also be called upon to certify as to his sobriety; 'for,' added the doctor, with a smile, 'if I am, as O'Reilly says, *overcome*, I had better invalid, for I have not drunk one drop of wine by itself the whole of this blessed day.'

CHAPTER XXII.

IN WHICH LOVE AND WAR BEGIN TO JUMBLE INTO WHAT THE FIGHTING DOCTOR CALLED A CIRCUMSTANCE.

THE first thing which the doctor observed was a letter from the Admiralty, which Bowling, seeing his eye directed towards him, mentioned as his confirmation in his rank. By its side was another letter.

'I have seen that writing before, sir,' said the doctor.

'I should think not,' replied Bowling, with a smile.

'I would venture to bet my medical reputation against Captain Cornish's veracity, that this letter' (putting his finger upon it) 'is from Susan Monckton.'

Captain Bowling let out a word quite unfit for ladies to pronounce, although it does occur in the litany. 'How the devil can you know that, doctor? *You* are not like Cornish, with a Susan under your protection?'

'No, indeed, sir; my time has been better employed than in falling in love; but I saw a letter from Susan Monckton directed to Cornish not half an hour ago. Nay, you look incredulous, sir; but I had the letter in my hand; and, as a proof, I will nearly imitate the signature, which, as I have not seen in other letters, would be strong evidence that I speak the truth; although, if lying is as catching as the yellow fever, I should not expect to be much credited.'

'There is a pen, doctor,' said Bowling, with some anxiety; 'let me see anything like the signature.'

'The S,' remarked the doctor, as he took the pen, 'I shall never forget, for it was scratched something like a sickly G, with a tail as long as a boy's kite.'

'Curse the girl!' said Bowling; 'it's right, doctor—the very form and fashion—look at this;' and he showed the signature.

'There can be no mistake about this, Captain Bowling. I could not have guessed

that a girl would have written such an extraordinary hand.'

'Did he talk of her lightly?' said Bowling, crimsoning to the very cheeks as he asked the question. 'Did he make her name a jest in the mess-room? Did he make her the subject of his depraved anecdote? Did he—oh, damn it, doctor, do not let me ask what he did. Tell me, like a friend, did he speak kindly of her?'

'I should like to tell you first my opinion of him, sir. I take the liberty to affirm that I doubt if any man from the four quarters of the globe (and there are some pretty good ones in America) can hold a candle to him in the noble art, the poetical science of exaggeration; therefore, all that he said about this young lady is, or ought to be, subjected to the rule of subtraction and division. Frankly, then, he said she had been his mistress, and that she wrote to him for money.'

'It's an atrocious lie!' said Bowling, perfectly furious; 'and live or die, I will cram the falsehood down his throat to-morrow.'

'With my permission, Captain Bowling. You are on the sick list, and wanted to invalid this morning; and now you are all fire and tow, like Hudibras's horse. *Festina lente*; prudence will do more than courage with this man.'

'For God's sake, doctor, do not joke upon a subject to me the most painful.'

'I do not wish to joke, sir; neither do I wish you to commit yourself. I remarked that this letter was written upon black-edged paper; and on asking the cause, he mentioned that her brother was just dead, and she required some remittance, as her funds were exhausted in the funeral.'

'I would willingly enough believe that my funds were exhausted in the same ceremony for Captain Cornish. Now do you believe this story?'

'Not a word of it, excepting that the letter came from her.'

'This letter gives an account of a death also, and you see it is written on black-edged paper. Her friend, her companion Rosa, a girl I do not know, or ever heard of but in her letters, has died of consumption.'

'I think,' said the doctor, 'when you first made me the repository of your secret, that you mentioned Cornish having said that this Miss Monckton was the companion of Rosa Talbot?'

'Yes,' replied Bowling; 'and what then?'

'Is he any relation to that girl?'

'I am sure I do not know.'

'I'll think of it to-night, sir, and will find out all about it before to-morrow's sun sets, providing that I am not put under an arrest for running against this young captain.'

'Do you know who it was?' asked Bowling.

'I never saw him before, to my recollection, and, though our acquaintance has been short, have already seen too much of him.'

Bowling's fever was not very likely to get much the better for the news he had received, excepting as to the confirmation of his rank. Susan's letter was all affection, and rejoicing at his advancement and, as she stated, at the mention of his name in the *Gazette*, which she had read over some hundred times; she thought she could not too much admire his courage and determination. This occupied the first part of her letter. The conclusion was a melancholy recital of the last moments of her friend, and of the kind disposition of Mrs. Talbot, who had made her promise to remain with her. There was likewise a hint that her late companion had left her some mark of her affection in her will; but nothing definite was mentioned. There was not one word concerning Cornish, to whom she had written to the same place, and by the same conveyance. This could not be reconciled; and when Bowling thought of her letter being handed about the mess-room, the girl said to be suing for money, he could not believe, in spite of the proofs he considered he had, that it was the same Susan who declared herself devoted to him, and whose whole life had been, in his eyes, adorned with every moral excellence. Then again came the contradiction; was it likely that a girl, living, and requested to live, under the roof of her late companion's mother, with money left her, could be a pauper suing for aid? And how was it there was no mention of her brother's death? As these thoughts passed in his mind he rang his bell, and asked if the doctor was asleep.

The doctor, whose cabin was close to the captain's, took care to be fast asleep, as he had had quite enough of captains in love and captains in dudgeon for one day; besides which, he was turning his active brain to advantage, and felt more than usually interested in the affair. He was quite sure the story was exaggerated, for Cornish could not speak without embellishing; and he turned and twisted in his mind the best way to unravel the affair. As for Bowling, he did nothing but drink tamarind-water all night to cool him, and fretted himself into uncomfortable warmth the moment afterwards. It is especially difficult to cool love and a tropical fever at the same moment.

The next morning, long before the doctor was dressed, he received an intimation that the captain was anxious to see him; and he found his patient anything else but patient under the restraint he required. Bowling's reasonings struck the doctor as conclusive; but how was the truth to be elicited from a man who drew so liberally upon his imagination?

As the day got on, a boat was seen coming from the brig which had arrived the day before, and it required no telescope to dis-

cover that the captain was in it. As the doctor's story had been repeated in the gun-room, a sufficient interest had been created to muster all the officers on deck, not omitting the surgeon.

It was evident enough that the young captain was on particularly friendly terms with himself, for he lolled back in the style of a commander-in-chief, and kept his eye and his eyeglass directed to the *Echo's* rigging, as if to quiz it a little. The first lieutenant mechanically looked aloft; every rope was as taut as a harp-string; everything was neat and trim aloft; the yards carefully squared; and if the *Echo* was a small, she was a very efficient vessel. The boat had been watched from the moment it left the brig, and every preparation made for the reception of the scrupulous captain.

When he came on the *Echo's* deck, he hardly touched his hat, whilst all the other officers respectfully lifted theirs from their heads.

'Is Captain Bowling on board?' he said in a lisping, dandy pronunciation.

'He is, sir,' said the first lieutenant.

'Mention, if you please, that the Honourable Captain Curlew wishes to see him;'—here he looked aloft at the rigging, dangled his spy-glass elegantly to and fro, and then cast a satisfactory glance at his boots—evidently the latest fashion from the most approved son of Crispin. The first lieutenant soon appeared to herald the honourable gentleman to the cabin.

Never were two people of more opposite characters than the two captains now in the cabin of the *Echo*. One was a lavender-water dandy, screwed into shape by means of tight clothing and necessary padding; a man who considered he honoured the service by condescending to belong to it; and who was as ignorant of his profession as he was vain and superficial. The other was a loosely, rather carelessly dressed seaman, who considered the service as the first service in the world, that it was an honour to belong to it, and was perfectly informed of every particular, either in navigation or practical seamanship. Bowling watched every manœuvre with the practised eye of a sailor; but if Curlew was a gentleman by birth, Bowling had become a gentleman from observation.

'I hardly thought, Bowling,' said Curlew, with amiable condescension, 'that when we last parted at Jamaica we should soon meet again. You have got the start of me for the present, for you are two on the list senior to me. Sir John Jervis's despatch arrived in London a week before I returned from the West Indies, or I imagine I should have been before you.'

'It is only a pleasure deferred,' said Bowling; 'your interest will of course beat my exertions. She is a fine craft you have brought out.'

'Why, y-e-s, she is; but I don't think *my* first lieutenant understands his business: I shall break him the first opportunity.'

'I am sorry you should thus determine: he may be some poor fellow whose whole existence depends upon his profession, and who would half starve if you deprived him of his commission.'

'I think he would; what business have such fellows in the navy—men who have tumbled, God only knows how or why, on the quarter-deck? I am afraid to place my finger-glasses on my table after dinner, for fear he should ask for some rum to put in the water, and drink that which was intended to purify his digits.'

This very comfortable hit, purposely levelled at Bowling, did not occasion the slightest ill-humour, although he was rather fidgetty under its infliction; but, as he knew in those days how fatal it was to promotion for a lieutenant to be tried by his captain, even if acquitted, he suggested the safer mode of allowing the officer to exchange.

'Oh, no; exchange! that's unfair on the man to whom he would be sent; besides, I should for ever be stumbling over him. He will do very well to command a collier, or some such dirty-looking craft. I cannot bring anything against him yet, but I have no doubt that before the squadron sails I shall have charges enough to break a dozen such fellows. Oh, by the bye, I almost forgot it, but last night your surgeon was excessively insolent to me. Of course you cannot patronize a man who so far forgets himself as to run against a captain.'

'I think it fair to tell you, Captain Curlew, that I am not at all disposed to break an officer because he may displease another person. Last night, when he reported himself, he mentioned what had occurred, and requested me to notice if he was intoxicated or not. He was perfectly sober, and attended me professionally afterwards. I have always found him very attentive, and scrupulously respectful—a warm friend and a clever practitioner.'

'*Friend!* my dear Bowling!—nobody makes a friend of a surgeon;—fellows who come in cart-loads from Scotland, and who never return for fear of their squalid relations.'

'He is my *friend*, Captain Curlew, and I am proud of his friendship; but no friendship on my part shall shield any officer who may have been disrespectful. Shall I send for him?'

'By no means, in the cabin.'

'I am too ill to go on deck, or I should have been there to have received you.'

'Then I shall write to the admiral for a court-martial without he makes me an apology on my own, or on your quarter-deck.

You have no objection to place him under an arrest!'

'The greatest possible objection; for I should then deprive my men of the advice of one of the cleverest men in the fleet; besides, I have no ground for so doing.'

'I thought,' said Curlew, 'that any officer who behaved himself disrespectfully to his senior officer had committed an offence cognizant before a court-martial?'

'Perfectly true; but his disrespect might have arisen from accident, which would hardly warrant the accusation of drunkenness, which I understand you rather unguardedly made.'

'I cannot help saying that I consider this protection offered to an inferior officer as a shield I little expected to find from an officer of Captain Bowling's reputation.'

'And I cannot refrain from expressing my sorrow that any officer should wish to blight the prospects of another without ample grounds for so doing. I again repeat that whilst I will protect to the utmost every officer serving under my command whilst he is right, so I will carefully hand over to the justice of a court-martial any officer whose conduct deserves censure. I can say no more on the subject, which, I think, we had better change.'

'I shall then take my own course; and, as he is a *friend* of yours, I shall take no more notice of it. I have brought you one or two newspapers, which may amuse you in your sickness. You are much pulled down, but I hope all danger is past, and that you are convalescent.'

'I never was in any danger, I believe. How goes on my old gun-brig, which you left to exchange with me?'

'Gun-brig!—let me remember; no, I do not think I ever knew any officer who served in a gun-brig. And yet I think an old fellow of the name of Watson was made to invalid. He got his promotion for some trifling occurrence at Martinique; and having got this step, became a most undeniable toper. He was a low, vulgar fellow, sprung from the dregs, to which the admiral has very improperly allowed him to return, with a lieutenant's uniform to startle the natives.'

'I am sorry indeed to hear such an account of him, but glad beyond expression that the poor fellow who swam by my side—no, led the way at Martinique, will have sufficient to maintain him in his old age. I think he has done wisely to invalid, and of course will never go afloat again.'

'Never go afloat again!' said Curlew; 'I should think not, indeed, without he was placed in command of a barge on the Thames. Well, I hope I shall see you better to-morrow; I am going now to the admiral. And as for the doctor, now the spleen is over, and he is your friend, I will forgive the insult and the offender.'

'Mind, Captain Curlew, not on my account. Every man is amenable for his misconduct; and on this occasion, as on all others connected with the *service*, I am neuter. Good-bye. I should like to hear some news as to the movement of the fleet. And I thank you for the newspapers.'

Captain Curlew went on deck, and he saw the surgeon walking very unconcernedly indeed. He eyed him carefully; but the doctor's mind was on other subjects. The boat was manned; Curlew touched the rosette of his cocked hat with his forefinger, and descended slowly. A great man should never be in a hurry.

'I wonder who that top-sawyer might be,' said Patrick O'Leary to a bystander.

'He's a great gun,' replied another.

'He's the prettiest piece of Jemmy Jesseism I ever beheld. I'm blessed if his gloves wouldn't do for our captain to wear at the admiral's ball!'

'I'm just thinking,' said Paddy,—'Here comes the officer who got that crack in his leg in the last brush. He's coming at last to see the man to whom he is under such mighty obligations, and never had the grace to say so much as a "Thank your honour kindly," the nigger!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN WHICH JEALOUSY OF A SUSAN MAY MAKE A MAN ANXIOUS FOR A BET.

It had occurred to Cornish that in some of his numerous conversations with Susan, he had gleaned from her, when he was endeavouring to make himself considerably agreeable, that the young lady had somehow a great affection for a little boy of the name of Bowling, over whose birth and parentage hung some obscurity. The name being rather uncommon, and Captain Bowling being by no means a favourite of his, led him to the resolution of endeavouring to find out if Bowling had a brother, and where he was. The death of Cornish's wife, and the prospect of a law-suit and an inheritance, led him to anticipate his return to England, when he was resolved to lay siege to Susan's heart—to win her, if possible, without marriage—having that always in reserve.

'I have taken the liberty,' said Cornish, 'now my leg is able to perform its duty, of coming to your ship to thank you for all your kindness to me when I was wounded. I abstained from so doing before, as I imagined it would but be a cool acknowledgment without I came to you to express it.'

Bowling, who was a straightforward fellow, and had not the smallest notion of the insincerity of the world, believed every word; and putting out his hand, gave Cornish a squeeze

which must have enlightened his mind as to Bowling's strength when in perfect health.

'Sit down, Captain Cornish. Steward, put some claret and water, and some fruit, upon the table. What news have you from the shore and from England? I am now indebted to my friends to make me acquainted with both naval and military intelligence. This everlasting fever seems to cling to me like a drowning man to a grating; and I am so weak that I can hardly walk across my cabin.'

'I was once so ill with a fever that the heat of my room melted the wax candles; and put my servant in such a state of perspiration, that he lost two stone weight in a fortnight!'

'You must have suffered immensely; occasionally I feel as if I was consuming with fire, and the parching heat of my throat is like an oven.'

'I never could get a cool drink to restore me,' said Cornish, with the most wonderful preservation of countenance; 'for if ever I held a glass in my hand, it made the contents too warm to be pleasant.'

Bowling began to apprehend that his visitor's veracity was rather doubtful. As he always stuck to the truth himself, he was slow to suspect others, although the doctor's report of Cornish's fertility of invention was fresh in his ears.

'You have been ill ever since you dined at our mess, I believe?' said the soldier. 'I am glad you are getting fast towards convalescence, for I should not have liked any fatal result to have been occasioned by our wish to do honour to Sluyskin, or to our brothers in the sister service; but some of our men drank plenty of wine, smoked and sang, hallooed and hurrahed loud, yet escaped the fever.'

'It was not the wine which placed me in the doctor's list,' replied Bowling. 'I was annoyed, disconcerted, disappointed.'

'Alas!' replied Cornish, 'the more we travel along the road of life, the more we meet with disappointments and annoyances; —let us do whatever we may, the pleasures of existence are trivial enough. Some find a moment's relief from thought and anxiety in the pleasures of the chase, or the table; others in poring over books, and satisfying themselves that all is vanity; whilst others devote their existence to women; and after all the pangs and pains the sex occasion, are rewarded for their devotion with a premature old age.'

A smile came over Bowling's face as he heard the Apollo thus grave upon the very subject to which he devoted himself. 'I hardly thought,' he said, 'to have heard so moral a discussion from you.'

'Why, women are, and ever have been, the plague, the torment of my life. I thought that, in this southernmost point of Africa, I might be released from the importunities of the women; but here comes Curlew, and brings me letters for money — money—money!—the wealth of a Crœsus would not suffice to satisfy their insatiable rapacity.'

'Who is the fair beggar?' said Bowling, willing to lead him on.

'That Susan Monckton! whose health we drank just before you were taken sick.'

'She has written to me by the same conveyance,' said Bowling, determined now to fathom the mystery, 'and does not speak of want or misery. And I think she would apply to me directly, rather than to you or any other man indirectly.'

'I have heard her mention your brother's name, I think.'

'Brother! I have no brother, nor a relation in the world. If the chance shot of the enemy, or the more sure sapper and miner of death—sickness, overtook and seized me, I doubt if, with the exception of Susan, one soul out of the eight hundred millions of people who make this globe their nest would place a piece of crape round their hats, without it was done at my expense, and charged to my heir in the undertaker's bill. Brother! If I could but find a brother and a friend, I should not complain of the fleeting pleasures of this existence, or say that all is vanity. Yet I do not complain; I have before me a life of excitement and of hope, though of the fairest portion of that hope you have robbed me!'

'And how?' asked Cornish, filling his glass.

'In your correspondence with Susan Monckton, and the hints you threw out at the mess-table.'

'Ah! I see you imagined yourself the only fortunate youth in the world!'

'Do not misunderstand me, Captain Cornish. I cannot pretend ignorance as to the value of that word "fortunate," and how erroneously we generally apply it. I have not seen Susan for eight years; she was then but thirteen or fourteen—a mere child; but circumstances occurred to make me grateful to her, and I have in consequence, not having the rays of my friendship too widely diffused, centred it all in her. If, therefore, I find her so fallen as to be dependent upon a stranger for pecuniary assistance, and to write to the farthest point of Africa to *claim* some remuneration, how can you wonder that I say you have robbed me of my hope?'

'Women in her station of life are generally accessible.'

'And yet,' said Bowling, 'she is of good family, and her character must have been considered beyond reproach, or Mrs. Talbot would never have allowed her to be the cherished friend of her daughter, who, to show her high sense of gratitude and opinion, left her some handsome consideration at her death.'

'Which,' said Cornish, with unaltered countenance, 'was particularly generous on Rosa's part, more especially as it was not Rosa's to leave.'

'You seem better acquainted with the family than I am. We have got upon the subject I courted, yet would have avoided; and as you have mentioned Susan's claim upon you, and I have mentioned my gratitude to her, I will relieve you of the necessity of sending her money—I will send her what she requires, although, if the world's report is true, I am not quite so affluent as Captain Cornish.'

'I may be affluent, but I have thousands of claimants of this description; and, as a total abandonment would be disreputable, I occasionally relieve them.'

'To what amount, and for what purpose, can she want money?'

'To bury her brother—some fifty pounds.'

'Why,' said Bowling, 'she is not going to keep her brother above ground until she gets remittances from the Cape of Good Hope, is she?'

'She has buried him, and is distressed in consequence. How do you do, doctor?'

The doctor, imagining that his captain might get too much excited with Cornish, came in uninvited with a draught for his patient, and was pleased to find him so cool and so steady.

'You are come to a moment, doctor,' said Bowling. 'Sit down there, and be a witness to a bet I am going to propose to Captain Cornish. Now, doctor, keep your ears open; and don't be afraid that the chance of my loss will make me the least agitated. I care not more for money, although I have so little——'

'Let us have the proposition,' said Cornish. 'I like a bet as well as any man.'

'Well, then, I will offer you three, all contingent one on the other:—In the first place, I will bet you one hundred pounds that you have not received a letter from Susan Monckton.' (The doctor thought his patient had gone mad, and began making as many signs and grimaces as a monkey eating hot chestnuts.)

'*Done!*' said Cornish, diving his hand into his pocket.

'"*Festina lente*," as the doctor said, this Susan Monckton being the companion of Rosa Talbot.'

'Done, damn it, done!'

'The three bets, you understand, must be contingent; and you must take them all, or none.'

'Done, done!—I'll bawl out "*done*" so loud that the Cape shall re-echo it.'

'Don't do that,' said Bowling, with a smile; 'it is contrary to discipline, and may alarm General Clarke. The second bet is, that she never had a brother; and the third, that she has not asked you for one farthing, or to remit her any sum of money. You have no occasion to cry "*done*;" you agreed to that first.'

Cornish was considerably taken aback, which did not escape the quick eyes of either Bowling or the doctor.

'Done, sir,' said Cornish again, whose fertility of invention was sure to rise in proportion as it was attempted to be depressed.

'The *onus probandi*,' said the doctor, addressing Cornish, 'being with you.'

'Which fruit did you say, doctor? These are shaddocks——'

The doctor smiled, and apologised for his rudeness in having ventured a remark in Latin. 'I mean to say, Captain Cornish, as I am umpire, that I consider the necessity of proving she did write to you, etc., to be on your part.'

'How is that possible? You may question the handwriting.'

'No fear of that,' said Bowling. 'Here is her letter to me; here is the signature; and, for aught I care, you may compare every word in the letter. There is nothing in it that she need be ashamed of, or anything that I should blush to hear read.'

'What the deuce have I done with that infernal letter?' said Cornish, feeling his pockets. 'I thought I put it in my pocket; I must have left it with my others; but, however, it is easily found, and I shall as easily win my bets. But remember, if she says it is to bury her brother, I am not to prove that she had a brother, because I am ignorant of her family; she might have had a dozen transported for all I know, or——'

'Heave and Paul! as the sailors say,' interrupted Bowling, holding up his hand; 'if the words, or words to that effect, or any words which can be twisted with any reference to the subject whatever, are found in the letter, I will pay you the next minute. And as this is a subject of some importance to me, though trivial to you, the sooner it is settled the better. The doctor can go on shore with you now, that is, at your convenience, and his being satisfied will satisfy me.'

'I have a great deal at present to do. I have to call upon the different captains of the squadron; and I have some preparations to make relative to some baggage I had embarked for India, which I wish to have landed. However, by the evening I trust I shall be able to make good my claim to the bet, and to satisfy the most fastidious as to the handwriting.'

'By the bye, Captain Cornish,' said the doctor, 'I believe I owe you an apology for having omitted to get you the song Captain Bowling sang. I dare say I may venture to solicit that, as a favour granted to me.'

'Why, doctor,' said Bowling, 'we rough-spun sons of the ocean have very little to do with the Muses, and, according to belief, nothing whatever with the Graces; but as

you ask it, and Captain Cornish wishes it, I will get it ready to envelope my cheque, which I imagine I must have lost.'

'Not the slightest doubt of it,' said Cornish; 'but I have a favour to ask. You proposed this bet after my having told you the contents of the letter' (Bowling nodded assent); 'now of course you will not consider it dishonourable in me having accepted the bet, knowing that I must win.'

'Certainly not,' replied Bowling, who shook him by the hand, and wished him good-bye.

'It is a rash bet that you have made, Captain Bowling,' said the doctor. 'A man would never risk his money upon such an affair without he is confident; and although Captain Cornish is a considerable archer in the way of the long bow, yet he can scarcely be so decidedly a disciple of Tom Pepper as to have invented this yarn.'

'If I lose it, I lose all my money and all my hope, so that when hope is gone, and the purse dry, I shall then, having nothing else to do, jump overboard, and save myself the exertion of swimming. What made you ask for the song?'

'I have an idea that this song will lead to some discovery. At any rate it can do no harm, and you may receive the request as a compliment to your talent. You are better to-day, I think, sir?'

'Much better, doctor. This excitement, which I restrained by prudence, has done me good! I should like to sit under the awning, and feel the fresh breeze again.'

'I have no objection; lean on me, sir. Steward, bring a chair on deck. Gently, sir; you totter a little, and are, as O'Leary says, rather "crank under canvas."'

How perfectly delightful is the first breath of fresh air to the feverish patient in a ship! There are no windows, not at least in brigs, to give a fresh circulation, or cheer up the sick man by even the sight of the everlasting sea—a sight which to a sailor ever offers something to amuse his mind. It is to him an ever-changing panorama; the very tints of the ocean, occasioned by passing clouds, and varying at every breath, are delightful to gaze upon, and made doubly so after a close confinement in the narrow cabin.

'He does not seem much inclined to pay all his visits, or look after his Bengal baggage,' remarked Bowling to the doctor, 'for he is going on shore. I feel, somehow, lighter in my mind; one way or the other the affair will be cleared up; and they say when things are at the worst they must mend.'

The different officers of the ship, one by one, came up and made inquiries after the health of their captain; every midshipman seemed rejoiced to see his commander's face again; and the seamen, who crowded the forecastle, all looked aft, and took off their hats in token of respect and of satisfaction.

'He's all right, anyhow,' said O'Leary; 'the divil a shark or a land-crab will peck at his mutton this time, and they'd have strong stomachs, I'm thinking, to eat him just now. I wonder he ever condescended (there's a word, boys, I learnt of the soldiers) to spake to that tearing fellow just gone.'

The fresh air, the delighted countenances of his officers and men, their earnest inquiries, their sincere behaviour, advanced the convalescence of Bowling. The mind is a mighty doctor; and confidence does more than physic.

Before sunset, a shore-boat brought a letter from Cornish to Bowling. It ran thus:—

'My dear Sir,—I cannot convey to you my regret at what has happened. My careless servant left my papers on the floor, and the cockroaches and the rats have made a feast upon them. The only thing I have saved is Susan's signature, which I send you enclosed, and which will satisfy you, I hope, of the truth of the letter. For the rest I have only my word as a proof, which will, of course, be ample, and which will establish my claim to the bet. You will do me the favour, therefore, at your earliest convenience, to enclose me the amount. I hear you are to sail shortly. I shall return to England.

'I am, my dear sir, &c.'

'The devil I will! Here, doctor, read this.—Are you satisfied?'

'It's an awkward business to doubt a soldier's word.'

'And it's a much more awkward circumstance for any one to throw an imputation upon the honour of a girl to whom you are engaged to be married.'

The doctor started, and repeated the word —'Married!'

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH THERE IS A SCENE, AND NOT FROM A PLAY, SHOWING THAT NIGHT IS NOT ALWAYS EMPLOYED BY ASTROLOGERS 'IN SHOOTING STARS.'

SAILORS in love are rare birds! and I don't think there ever was one who kept his own secret. There is something very soothing in the calm evening of a tropical climate; when, far from home and all we love and hold dear, the idle sail hangs useless from the yard, and all is motionless, then the heart reverts to home, and the tongue betrays its secret.

The doctor, on visiting his patient, entered boldly into the subject, and told his captain that the affair had terminated as he had foreseen. People are good prophets after the event has happened. It's quite marvellous how generally correct all wiseacres are who prophesy retrospectively. 'Now, sir,' said

the doctor, 'you must remain quite quiet in this affair. I must write and say you have asked me if I am satisfied, and I shall certainly tell him that I am far from being so. He will call me out, and I think I had better employ O'Leary as my second, for he certainly would become the principal long before the pistols were loaded.'

At this moment a lieutenant from the flagship brought the sailing orders of the *Echo*. Captain Curlew was to sail in company, and both vessels were to return to Portsmouth. Bowling's heart beat high as he read the document. He was the senior officer, and that circumstance, as it hindered any annoyance from the fastidious commander of the *Harrier*, gave him much satisfaction. The vessels were to sail at daylight.

'This business must be settled first, doctor; we must not run away and leave our honours behind us. For my own part, I am quite satisfied Susan is true to me; and since the cockroaches and the rats eat the convenient letter (that's a regular story to tell the marines), I feel I am exonerated from payment, and should, on the contrary, claim my bet. You are my friend, and I leave the affair in your hand; if you feel it necessary, I have strength enough to go on shore at midnight, and give any satisfaction.'

'Do you commission me to demand the debt?'

'I do. You will bring to Captain Cornish's mind the terms of the bet: that he was to produce the letter, in failure of which to all intents and circumstances he loses the bet. Whilst you are gone I will get myself in trim for this affair, at which, to tell you the truth, saving that I hold duelling to be a folly, I am rather pleased than annoyed. So that I revenge the insult passed upon Susan, I care not how soon they bury me in yonder sandheap.'

It was now eight o'clock, and only eight hours remained to arrange a most delicate question.

The doctor was a man of few words in these matters, but as unflinching as a rock. He walked to Cornish's room. The captain was indulging in a quiet bottle, and making up for some lost time during the cure of the wound. He begged the doctor might be shown in, and the doctor begged he would come out. On his appearance the debt was demanded.

'Does he doubt my word, sir?' said Cornish; 'does he doubt the word of an officer and a gentleman?'

'I really cannot say, sir,' replied the doctor; 'but this I know, that you have not acted upon the terms of the bet, and therefore *I* consider you have lost it; and, moreover, that you ought to pay it.'

'That may be your opinion, which perhaps would be acceptable if asked. In these matters one may require the advice of a friend, not of an adversary; if you will wait here one moment, I will send you a brother officer, who will represent me in this little affair.'

'He talks devilish coolly about this,' said the doctor to himself. 'If his second be half as fire-eating a gentleman as his principal, we shall be in action before to-morrow morning.'

The ensign who always called Cornish 'Apollo' was the improper choice of Cornish. This young officer, although a gallant and gentlemanly man, was new to the business he undertook, and preferred the eclat of a duel to its arrangement.

The doctor did not break ground hostilely; he merely demanded the debt. The ensign smiled at the request, and brought forward his friend's honour and word, declared the payment quite out of the question, and finished a very short speech by affirming that his principal was the injured man, and that if an arrangement could be made about the money, none but the most complete apology could satisfy his friend for the insult of suspecting his word.

'Why, about that,' said the doctor, 'I am not inclined to enter; only I must say that the cockroaches and the rats are curious allies to destroy a document, and that in broad daylight.'

'I assure you, sir,' said the ensign, drawing himself up at least an inch, 'I know very little about alliances of rats and cockroaches. The whole affair is in a nutshell—you demand payment?'

'I do, sir,' said the doctor.

'And we refuse to pay it; there is no misunderstanding *that*. Now, sir, I am prepared to hear your next request.'

'My request is, sir, that you convey to Captain Cornish the conviction in Captain Bowling's mind that your friend, as an honourable man, is bound to pay the lost bet; and with that implied imputation upon his character, he leaves Captain Cornish to pursue his own course.'

'Then you do not intend to demand satisfaction?'

'I demand the debt; and I leave your friend with the imputation I have before mentioned in the event of his refusal to pay.'

'Then I demand satisfaction for my friend, sir; and as I know Captain Bowling sails at daylight, the sooner we fix upon the ground the better. It is a beautiful night for parade practice, and we are ready this instant.'

'You seem, sir,' said the doctor, with much sternness, 'to look with a light eye on this serious subject. Supposing the duel ends fatally, are you prepared to say that this haste, this unbecoming haste, will not be a subject of bitter reflection for all the days you have to live?'

'That is my affair, not yours, sir. It is now nine o'clock; name the time and place yourself; you will find us punctual.'

'You are aware, sir, that Captain Bowling has been seriously ill of a fever. To-day was the first day he has been able even to sit on deck; the night air will, in all probability, cause a relapse, and I have no hesitation in saying that he could not stand upright without assistance for the required space of time.'

'Quite immaterial, sir,' replied the ensign; 'they can arrange this trifling matter in chairs. I have no objection to any proposition you can make in the way of accommodation.'

'What can you do for the night air?'

'I cannot alter the night into day, neither can I annul the Admiral's order; but I will listen to any suggestion you may make.'

'Then, perhaps, as my patient is so ill, you will allow me to represent my principal?'

'As far as I am concerned, sir, it is a matter of the greatest indifference if you or Captain Bowling meet my friend; but excuse me if I say that I cannot possibly imagine that shooting you could give any satisfaction for an insult offered by another. However, since it is agreeable to you, I will ask Captain Cornish.'

The doctor paced the room, like an unquiet spirit, while the young gentleman went with his strange proposal to his principal.

'D— me!' said he, 'Apollo, I do not see the difference myself. A duel is a duel, and satisfaction is satisfaction; and if you shoot this pugnacious doctor instead of the captain, it's all the same thing to you and me, although rather different to the corpse.'

'I tell you,' said Cornish, 'that I detest that Bowling; he is, I can see, destined to be a formidable obstacle in my path, and although I owe him some gratitude for the use of his tent and his Irish servant, nothing can alter my wish to rid myself of him. This affair is most opportune: he sails for England to-morrow; I cannot start so soon, and then only in a transport; he will be on the spot I would occupy, and supplant me where I would be first, or alone. I have no quarrel with this effervescing doctor; my quarrel is with Captain Bowling; and you may tell his friend that if his man does not show, I shall not hesitate to brand him as a coward.'

'That would scarcely answer after his brilliant affair at Martinique.'

'Men often are brave in the heat of a battle, but very shy when the whole work is to be done unassisted by others, when there is no band, no cheering, no one to support them, and when no particular shot is levelled at them. It is a very different thing where the parties concerned know that each is levelling at the other. Do not delay the parade; the suspense is worse than the fight; not that I care one straw if I had to fight the whole ship's company. I once fought four fellows between four in the morning and my breakfast, and pinked them all. When you have sent Gallipot away, come and let's have a cool bottle of claret.'

It certainly was a contradiction in nature; but so it was. Cornish was unconscious of fear; he was just as cool under fire as a practised gamester when the cards are being dealt. He sat at the window actually humming the very song he had received in the morning, and learning it by heart, as unconcerned about the whole affair as if he were to be a spectator rather than actor, filling his glass, balancing himself on a chair, and singing the stave. The strength of his malice, perhaps, buoyed him up even against any apprehension.

'Well,' said he, as the ensign entered, 'have you settled it? what hour is the parade with fire-arms? Out with it, old boy; don't stand upon any ceremony.'

'I have arranged it all at eleven o'clock. We are to be on a spot a little removed from the general landing-place, where it appears a boat can land; but you will have to fight in a chair, for it appears Bowling is too weak to stand. I must say that a duel, under these circumstances, has been brought before me, by the doctor, as one not very likely to do either of us much credit; for if, as the medico says, his man is so weak that he cannot stand, he evidently will be as weak of arm as of leg, and consequently you have an unwarrantable advantage.'

'As far as that goes, it is not my fault; it is his misfortune. I'll fight him in his own boat, if he likes—or I'll sit upon the spanker-boom and have a shot at him; or you may make any allowance you like, to make the balance even. He shall have first shot, only let it go on.'

'We all feel a little concerned,' said the ensign, 'about an affair of honour; and the foolish custom of trying one's pluck has got many a poor fellow shot;—

'"Where no honour can be gained
It's thrown away in being maintained——"

as Hudibras says; and I cannot help thinking you would stand upon much higher ground if you wrote yourself to the doctor giving him the option of withdrawing his hero from this affair until his health is restored, and another opportunity occurs. It is just two to one against him at present. The doctor declares that the cold night air may cause a relapse, when his death would be certain—or you might shoot him; you have only the chance of the latter.'

'That is a pleasant alternative. They say that a warranted horse, independent of the human load he carries, carries also a law-suit on his back; so I, with my military accoutrements, would have the additional burden of a duel. I leave my honour in your hands; of course, if I am censured, you will be held responsible.'

'That's particularly pleasant,' said the en-

sign, with a smile, 'and makes friendship a rare commodity, so that if any hot-headed fellow disapproved of my proceedings, you would do me the particularly kind office of cutting my throat. Will you write to him or the doctor?'

'I would see them both——you know where—first.'

'And you will not allow me to write?'

'My honour, I say again, is in your hands. Recollect, they insulted me; the very suspicion expressed by the doctor, that the rats and cockroaches were *convenient* creatures, implies a doubt upon my word; and I'd have you to know that no man ever did that yet.'

'Indeed!' said the ensign.

'Throughout my native country, there is neither man nor boy, maid, wife, nor widow, who would discredit me on the most trivial occurrence. I hold a man who would tell a lie, and pickpocket, on exactly the same terms;—one robs you of that which obtains credit, and the other robs you of the credit.'

'I suppose it must go on then, without Captain Bowling dies in the boat.'

'Or I make him president of the Stiff-and-Steady Club.'

'You had better arrange your affairs, Apollo; a chance shot may kill the devil, you know.'

'Pshaw! I have no presentiment of death; and my will is made. I have not left you anything, so you have no interest in getting me shot. What o'clock is it?'

'Only ten; we have three quarters of an hour more before we start upon this expedition.'

'Have you seen the marking-irons in good order? You had better change the flints; its an awkward circumstance a pistol missing fire, for which every second ought to be held responsible. You will find everything in the case, and I am ready whenever you require me.'

Very differently did Bowling prepare for this adventure. He had but little occasion to make a will; but as the German doctor had made mention of some money which the dog-stealer left as his, he wrote a short last will and testament, leaving all he had, either now or in reversion, to the object still nearest his heart—Susan. He wrote a hasty letter, detailing the event from its commencement; and finished by declaring that she was as pure and as chaste in his eyes as she had ever been, and that although, at first, he had allowed some jealous thoughts to disturb his quiet, now, near perhaps his last moment, he regarded her as the only object for which he desired life.

The doctor was much more fidgetty than the captain; for the captain had been quietly asleep during the time of the conference on shore. On being told the turn affairs had taken, he seemed to gather fresh strength. 'Never fear me, doctor,' said Bowling; 'I may be sick and weak in body—my limbs may totter, my eyes fail—but I feel I am all right *here*,' he continued, touching his heart. 'I have had too many shots whistling over my head to care much about a solitary pistol; and although I do not think I could dance a fandango, yet I am quite certain I shall not run away.'

When Patrick O'Leary heard that the gig's crew (he pulled the stroke-oar of the gig, and was captain's coxswain) were ordered to be ready to go on shore at a quarter to eleven, he took it for granted that it was to bring off some good things for the captain, in the way of fruit. But he was rather at fault even with his own conjectures when he considered that at eleven o'clock all Cape Town were quietly in bed. 'Never mind, boys,' said he, as he argued the case; 'it must be for *something;* and I suspect ——'

'Gig's crew!' said the midshipman in the boat.

'Now, boys!' said Paddy, 'look slippery, and don't let the tar stick to your heels.'

'Haul the boat alongside,' said the doctor.

The officer of the watch desired the quarter-master and the sentinels to come to the whip; the doctor slid down the side with a case under his left arm, wrapped up in a cloak; and, to the immense astonishment of O'Leary, he lent a hand to lift his sick captain out of the chair. The whip was unhooked, and the captain desired the chair to be left in the boat. Not a word was said; the boat shoved off, the doctor steered her, and in a few minutes she was on shore. The doctor desired two of the men to lift the captain into the chair, and to carry him to a place round a low point, and there deposit him.

'Go back to the boat, my lads,' said the captain, 'and the doctor will call you when you are wanted.'

'I'm just thinking, sir,' said O'Leary to the doctor, 'that if it's after taking the stars or the moon the captain is, I'm just the boy to hold the *sexton* for him.'

'We shan't want him, I hope,' replied the doctor, being rather absent, and not noticing O'Leary's mistake of the word 'sextant.'

'I'd better hould the time-piece, anyhow; and I can stop it when the captain calls "Stop!" as well as any man in the univarsal world.'

'Send the men to the boat,' said the doctor. 'And do you, O'Leary, keep close here; but, mind, you are not to come without you are called.'

'No, your honour. But who is here, I wonder?' said O'Leary, as he perceived Cornish and his friend walking along.

'You must not fire at him, Apollo—upon

my soul, you must not!—those rats and cockroaches will eat you up if you do;—a sick man in a chair—it's murder. Stand one shot, and shake hands.'

'We'll see about that; give them every advantage—moon, stars, and all. He may sit down; I'll stand up.'

'Consider that you are in the wrong—stand the shot, like a soldier.'

'And then pay a couple of hundred pounds? Not a bit of it.'

O'Leary now began to understand that something was in the wind: he was not the boy to be out of any row within ten miles of him, if his legs would get him there in time. So he quietly crept up on his hands and knees to well within reach of the chair, and close to the cloak which the doctor had used to conceal the case of pistols. He crept under this, and there remained.

The ensign offered the first shot, which the doctor refused. It was to be decided by a toss-up; and a dollar was thrown up.

'Woman for ever!' said the ensign.

'There's no woman on a dollar!' said the doctor. 'Cry heads or tails.'

'Tails! by the holy poker!' said O'Leary, aloud. 'Cry tails! doctor, dear; what's the use of a man's blessed head if ——'

'Tails!' said the ensign.

It fell tails. O'Leary had crept up close behind the chair, and was seated almost under it.

'You have the first fire,' said the doctor; 'there is no occasion to move the chair; we can walk the ground from it.' The ground was measured, and Cornish placed. The doctor came to the captain, and said, 'You had better keep your pistol pointed at him; it will discourage him a little.'

'I doubt if I can hold it out straight, even whilst you give the word.'

'But I can, your honour!' said O'Leary, putting his arm through the chair and supporting his captain's; 'and bad luck to me if it will shake enough to spill a drop from a bumper of wine.'

'Go away, O'Leary,' said the captain.

'Not I, your honour; you may flog the inside of me out, but I'm blessed if I don't have my share of this fun anyhow. Blaze away, your honour!'

The doctor had withdrawn. The word 'Fire!' was given almost directly; and Cornish's ball struck the front leg of the chair—it turned it off, or O'Leary might have called for the sexton.

'By the piper that played before Moses, it's our turn now! That's it, your honour—as straight as a seam on the deck.'

'Fire!' cried the ensign.

'Blaze away for dear life!' But there was no blaze; the fatigue had been too much for Bowling; and he was positively unable to pull the trigger, for his finger was not on it, and he was on the point of fainting. The doctor immediately stepped up. Cornish remained in his place, believing he had wounded his adversary, at whom he had not taken a very indifferent shot, when up jumped O'Leary. 'By the powers! if the captain can't fire, I can. It's not me that will stand to be shot at for nothing.'

'I have no objection,' said Cornish, coolly; 'he may fire by deputy.'

'O'Leary,' said the doctor, 'call a couple of the men.' And in a perfectly exhausted state, Bowling was again embarked.

'I can offer you no further satisfaction on this point,' said the doctor. 'And I must remind you, Captain Cornish, that this unfortunate affair does not lessen Captain Bowling's claim for the money. I wish you good-night, gentlemen.'

'Rather a spirited fellow, that O'Leary!' said Cornish.

'A very gentlemanly man, that doctor!' said the ensign.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH THERE IS A CONFESSION, A HERO, A DOCTOR, AN ATTORNEY, AND A LEARNED DISSERTATION UPON THE CROPS OF FARMERS AND BARBERS.

THE German doctor had troubled himself very little about his charge ever since he took French leave and went to sea. An attorney regulated the affair of the legacy; what interest there was was duly invested; and so the matter went on, and the small sum accumulated. It was, however, about this time that the solicitor called, and mentioned that Bowling must be of age, and that the purport of the will should be acted up to. 'You remember that there was a small box which that respectable friend of yours, the dog-stealer, left, on which was a written injunction that it was not to be opened until February 1st, 1800. Here we are at the conclusion of January; and the day after to-morrow, if you are disengaged, I can wait upon you, and read, in all probability, the life and adventures of a dog-stealer.'

The engagement was made and kept: the box was brought to the German doctor's and opened. In it was found a sheet of long paper, closely written, from which fell a small silver knife, with 'Thomas' marked on the silver shield, and a pocket-handkerchief.

'Here's rubbish!' said the German. 'Is there anything else, equally valuable, in that precious document?'

'No,' said the solicitor. 'Shall I read it aloud?'

'If you please,' said the other, amusing himself by imitating the exact face and manner of the attorney.

'Before I die,' began the document, 'I may as well leave something behind me that may be of comfort and consolation to others——'

'Dat is mighty fine tongue that,' said the doctor. 'Mine friend de Herr Hanson never has that written!'

'It has been drawn up by some friend, for the writing is like a copying clerk's in an office, and we shall soon get through it.'

'I have done many a deed to make the heart quake when Death is in the room, and only waiting to take breath before he comes to the bedside——'

'Mein Gott! that last is Herr Hanson's.'

'So I'll take a glass of brandy, and make a clean confession——'

'Honest poy!'

'I was always a vagabond. I was born a vagabond, bred a vagabond, lived a vagabond, and shall die a vagabond——'

'What an amiable confession! and he never mentions the parson.'

'It was in the year 1782 that I was in the costermongering line in Dorsetshire; that is to say, I went about with a donkey and cart, and I took everything I could find——'

'Mein Gott! and he of the gallows never has spoken!'

'It was quite the same if it was a turkey, a goose, linen hung to dry, apples, travellers' coats, money, dogs, or little children——'

'What a menagerie!'

'I was sitting by the roadside one Monday morning (I remember that, because I was rather drunk overnight, and I never got drunk but on Sunday evenings, when I had nothing to do), feeding my donkey with a little hay I had picked up as I came along, and wondering what luck would come, when I saw a nursery-maid place a child on a seat close to the gate which opened on the road. The maid then ran away to a hedge; and, if I was not as drunk as I was overnight, I saw a black hat the other side. "Oh!" says I, "that's the game, is it? Then I'll teach you honesty, young woman, if I never knew it myself." So I went very quietly, and takes the little lad, who was fast asleep, and, wrapping it carefully up in the shawls near him, I popped it into the cart alongside of a young lamb that had strayed by accident into the cart; and, getting on the shaft myself, "Gee, Neddy," said I, and away we went. Ever since I entered the profession, I never did such a foolish thing before as teaching honesty. It's a bad trade, and never answers; besides, the world's so precious ungrateful. I cut away at a donkey's short and sweet pace; turned up a cross road which I knew well; and, having made a pretty good voyage, I was coming round home to London again.

'The child slept well enough for an hour or so, when it soon makes me know it was not dumb. I patted the poor thing; I coaxed; but no, it would cry. "It must be for brandy," said I; so I opened its mouth, and gave it a drop. It was all right; the precious vagabond got drunk, and he slept again like a lord. I had a missus at home, who was the best hand at disposing of things in the world; and as I drove into my yard she was ready to tear my eyes out for being so long away. When she saw the child, she was near clawing me to pieces. She swore I was married to another; and if she had not seen with her own eyes how the child was dressed, and that it was no more like me than St. Giles's Church is to a gridiron, I don't think she would have been long without giving me a lesson of honesty. Well, we grew fond of the child; and although I afterwards took to the dog-stealing line, and made a profitable concern of it, yet that boy never had a hand in the transaction. He took wonderfully to liquor, and sang like a lark on a spring morning. As I was pretty well known for not being a licensed hawker in that part of the country, I never went that way again, and who the child belonged to I don't know; but the child had a small pocket, and in it I found the silver knife and the pocket-handkerchief. All the child's linen was marked T. H., like on the handkerchief; and he had a mole on his left shoulder, right on top of it. Now, as missus is long since dead, and I am, I believe, not far from following her, I do the last act of justice to the boy. I have no friends, no relations. The law has left me the last of our race, and Tyburn has been our executioner; so I leave all I have in the world by a will to this boy, who I have called Thomas Hanson; and if his parents are alive, they may get him back again, with money enough to buy him new clothes and to pay for his education. And I have left it as my wish that this paper may not be opened till 1800, because in that year, and in the month of February or March, he will be about one-and-twenty years of age. Then he may get his money and his right name at the same time. And all this is true, as I think I am a dying man.' The paper was signed 'Thomas Hanson,' and dated a fortnight before he died.

'There is no man so bad,' said the solicitor, 'that all good is extinguished in him; as there is no such thing as cold, but merely a comparative lesser degree of heat, so there is no man "bad," but merely a comparatively greater diminution of good. Here are half a dozen ideas come into my head. In the first place, the legacy duty of ten per cent. ought to have been paid, and must still be paid. We shall have some trouble in identifying this scapegrace, who is at sea, and nobody knows if dead or alive; and I really see no other method than to advertise him.'

'I have never heard from him since he ran

away,' replied the doctor, 'and I have never seen anyone who knew him. There was a little girl, the poor clergyman's daughter, whom he saw last; but that is now some nine or ten years ago. She is living in Devonshire; but her mother resides, I have heard, at Edmonton. I can drive down and make inquiries of her; and in the meantime you may take any steps you think proper to discover the family who, about twenty-one years ago, lost a child.'

'If we were to advertise the child with its money, you would find plenty of mothers within a fortnight. This shall be my care; whilst you must endeavour, as you undertook the responsibility of the will, to find out this Thomas Hanson. It's a great chance if he goes by that name.'

'No; that is certain. I put him to school myself under the name of Hanson, and he was always called so by the clergyman's family.'

'Well,' said the attorney, 'we will advertise him. That can do no harm, if properly done; and we must endeavour to do our best for him.'

The good disposition of the doctor was sadly thwarted. He found, on inquiry, that an old lady of the name of Monckton had died not a month previous; that a daughter had attended the funeral; that the furniture had all been sold; and that no one knew anything about anybody of the name of Hanson. The daughter had only appeared for a day; the undertaker was paid by a tall lady in black; the house was let to another family; and Mrs. Monckton's name was only to be seen on the gravestone, which mentioned her as the widow of the late Reverend Robert Monckton, of St. Giles's.

This unsatisfactory communication was made to the solicitor, who sent a person down to make further inquiries. He only gleaned that 'two ladies, both dressed in deep mourning, came down to the funeral; that one declared herself the daughter of the deceased; that directly the funeral was over they drove away again towards London; that the only maid-servant had gone, somewhere in London, to a place; and that nobody cared much about the old woman, as she was very poor.'

'Ah!' said the solicitor, 'that is true enough. A man who wishes to consign himself to oblivion has only to declare his poverty. Then all the pretended friends who hovered about his house whilst the sunshine of affluence gave the feeblest ray will slink from his abode, and he may sink into his grave with only a hireling to close his eyes; for as to true friends, *one* is more than ever I found, and three more than ever I knew.'

After all, the fortune which was to descend to the adopted and stolen boy was hardly worth the trouble it occasioned; but the executor had a duty to perform, and no man was ever more scrupulously honest than the German doctor.

The solicitor, having business in Dorsetshire, resolved, at some personal inconvenience, to pass through as many towns and villages as he conveniently could, and to sacrifice some time in searching out the parents of the lost child. The circumstances stated in the costermonger's paper were sufficient to justify the belief that the parents were far removed from poverty; the name might be gleaned from the initials; and there was a hope of success.

The solicitor was a short, sharp, clever man; his countenance was marked by an openness quite at variance with the concealment he was sometimes obliged to practise; he was one of those most useful members of society 'an honest man.' The poor seldom applied to him in vain; and his advice was given gratuitously to those who were, from their circumstances, unable to repay him.

He arrived by the public conveyance at Dorset; and having installed himself in a comfortable inn, desired a barber might be sent for.

There is no race of men more loquacious than barbers, and they are the best chroniclers of scandal in either town or country. It is a barber's business, as much as keeping his razors sharp, to be able to answer any questions concerning any event; but the variations of these useful members of society are immense.

A French barber is particularly conversant with all theatrical news; he is a good judge of dancing, and has a volubility of expression which can only be accounted for by his language, which, being snorted through the nose, does not require such great exertion of tongue, or occasion confusion by the quickness of utterance. The French here have a great advantage in argument, for their language is

> 'Not like our hoarse, grunting guttural,
> Which we're obliged to spit and splutter all,'

as Lord Byron says. The French barber is a dandy of the first water: there never is a hair displaced on his head—and if he is old as Noah, his crop is as black as a boy's of fourteen. Colley's Vegetable Dye, with which all the young gentlemen who cultivated moustachios, generally as fine and as silky as the feathers on a Blenheim spaniel's legs, and just as white, made acquaintance, is nothing to the wonderful water which changes the colour of the hair in one minute. The French barber is a gentleman; and if he cuts you, and you swear at him for his clumsiness, he would invite you to the chance of being spitted or shot at daylight the next morning.

Your English barber has no pretension to this fine feeling: he handles your nose as unconcernedly as you might pull his, and

does not care one straw for the piles of insults which a gentleman may heap upon him if the sore is soothed by an additional sixpence. It is the difference between an aristocratical and a republican people. The one barber considers himself your equal in all but his calling, and in that he is your superior; the other has an inherent feeling of inferiority, and a manner sufficiently pliant to agree to any proposition propounded by a respectable customer. If such a gentleman were to aver his belief that washing a negro's curly head in chalk and water would turn it white and lanky, there is not a barber in the country who would not acquiesce in the absurdity.

'What kind of weather have you had here lately?' began the solicitor, as the tonsor pinned his napkin round his neck.

'Pretty fine, sir—much as usual in this country; rains occasionally—sunshine now and then—high winds and clouds.'

'Corn all in?' asked the lawyer, willing to stop a meteorological journal.

'Pretty fair for that, sir; some into the southward, some out to the northward; but farmers all seem contented, rather than otherwise.'

'What's the news stirring in these parts? Your razor scrapes like a hand-saw!'

'Beg your pardon, sir—I'll try another. News, sir!' said he, strapping the razor over the palm of his hand, and trying its efficiency on the thumb-nail, 'none particular, sir. A house was burnt down last night in Sun Street; poor old Mrs. Wardle died this morning; Mrs. Williams has got a son; and Miss Weller is going to marry Lieutenant Watson, of the Royal Navy. Those sailors—you don't belong to the sea, do you, sir?'—(the solicitor murmured 'No')—'are a queer set of people. That Betsy Weller was barmaid at the Crown and Anchor; and the lieutenant used to drink grog with her every afternoon, and finished by taking this female liquor-jar as his wife. He is a great man; he took Martinique; and he had much better have taken the Miss-Isippi than Miss Weller!'—here the barber ventured a doubtful smile. 'Miss Crackshaw has run away with the baker; and they have lost another girl from the milliner's shop opposite.'

'What! do you lose many children in this neighbourhood?'

'Those soldiers, sir, run away with girls every day. There's nothing a girl won't believe if a soldier in uniform swears to it. They have lost about a dozen since last Christmas; and you may find them all next Christmas by lamplight.'

'Poor creatures!' said the solicitor, getting released from the thraldom; 'poor creatures! How long have you lived here?'

'I have been here man and boy these thirty-five years—which is my age. I was born here. My father kept the shop—I hope I shall have the honour of frequently seeing you in it: I've capital soap and pomatum; your hair is rather dry, sir—before me.'

'Do you recollect any child being missed from this neighbourhood about twenty years ago?'

'We lose them just as regular as a recruiting sergeant, or a wooden-legged sailor, passes through the town.'

'I mean a child, a baby, an infant, about two years old.'

'Why, sir, let me see;—Tom Scamp went off when he was six; Mary Simpson—ah, she was fourteen; and Harrison's maid went mad after she lost her master's child.'

'Harrison!' said the lawyer.

'Yes, Harrison. It must now be some twenty-two years ago—not *quite* so much; I should think it was only a child; and they never heard of it again, although they made inquiries year after year. At last they got so melancholy that they left the neighbourhood, and went away, the Lord knows where. Beg your pardon, sir, I have another customer waiting.'

'Stop a moment, and here's a shilling more. Can you tell me anyone who knows anything about this affair?'

'To be sure, sir! Mrs. Marsh, the mother of the girl, lives close to me. She is always at home; and this is her name and address—good-morning, sir.'

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH THERE IS A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION, AND 'A CHASE OF IDLE HOPES AND FEARS,' BUT NOT 'BEGUN IN FOLLY, CLOSED IN TEARS.'

THE *Echo* and the *Harrier* were together. Bowling's health improved as he got into the open sea. The night air had been very prejudicial to him; and the fatigue, which he was after all unable to bear, caused a relapse. It was owing to this that the two brigs communicated very little one with the other. On board of the *Echo* everything went on properly and rapidly; while on board of the *Harrier*, owing to the ignorance of Curlew, and his want of confidence in himself, and consequently in everybody else, the men were harassed with needless occupations and punishments. It appeared that every moment brought its annoyances. There was always work to be done, and it almost always required all hands to do it.

Everything, on the contrary, went smoothly on board the *Echo*. The captain's eye was not necessary after once the discipline of the ship had been formed, and the severity of one punishment had deterred others from any breach of the Articles of War. It was one of Collingwood's maxims, well worthy of imitation, that punishment should not be

inflicted for every trifling misdemeanour. Corporal punishment should be, to the discipline of a ship, what the punishment of death is to the laws of society. The first, when resorted to, should not be needlessly inflicted; neither should it ever be resorted to when the offence is so trivial that the punishment would be trivial. For the first serious offence, punish seriously; and for the future there will be but few culprits awaiting the lash. Hang a man *only* for murder; the vagabond who robs will never cut a throat. Punish a man severely, in the navy, for drunkenness; for that on board a ship is the worst crime, as every man's life is endangered by it; and even then allow at least twenty-four hours to pass before the infliction of the punishment.

Of all the subjects which have occupied the time and the talents of most writers, there is none of greater consequence than this. Take from the captain the power of inflicting the disgusting application of the cat, and you rob him of the only means yet discovered for the preservation of discipline. The man must be very little conversant with the navy of Great Britain who does not know that every other punishment which the ingenuity of first lieutenants has suggested has signally failed to support effective discipline without this last resource. Lord Collingwood is the man always cited. Lord Collingwood's ships were never in first-rate order, and no man began more severely than he did. No man is an advocate for tyranny; but the power of inflicting punishment is imperative.

By the time Bowling had been a fortnight at sea he was quite recovered; then came the emulation between the two vessels. In the execution of the manœuvres on board the *Echo* everything was done in silence: every man was at his station, and knew his duty. The reef was taken in in the short space of forty-five seconds; and when the topsail yards were at the masthead, those of the *Harrier* had not left the cap. It was, on the one hand, an easy evolution; on the other, a difficult practice. In the one ship, it was conducive to praise and to harmony; in the other, to grumbling and discontent.

On the morning of the seventeenth day, a large frigate was seen at daylight on the lee bows of the brigs. There was very little doubt of her country; the height of her sails, the rake of the mast, proclaimed her a French frigate. Bowling rubbed his hands with delight, made the signal to prepare for action, and to crowd all sail. Two brigs were estimated by him as, if not precisely a match, a very effective force for annoyance, and one which, by caution, might prove destructive to the enemy.

Curlew took a very different view of affairs. The broadside of a frigate was sufficient to sink either of the brigs; and in the event of any superiority of sailing being on the side of the enemy, the brigs might be turned into prizes at discretion. The state of the crew which he commanded was another source of alarm. Men whom, in the pride of his heart and the knowledge of his rank, he called every epithet his slender memory offered, were not likely, in a desperate service, to stand by him. The honour of the flag, the name of British seamen, might spur them on; but if a sailor in those moments requires the spur, victory may then be clutched by chance, but seldom by determination.

Curlew began a long telegraph, announcing his apprehension 'that the enemy was of very superior force,' to which Bowling answered that 'he was glad of it,' and hoisted the signal to continue carrying all possible sail. The French frigate, evidently more intent on making her passage than making prizes, continued her course under a crowd of canvas, but not so much as she might have carried. The French captain was evidently longing to give his enemies an uncomfortable reception, and yet not wishing to get into an action, when an accidental shot might wound a lower-mast, and consign him to the chance of capture from some of the numerous cruisers that swarmed over the seas.

Bowling improved the sailing of the *Echo* by practising a dozen well-known means. He piped the hammocks down, put a shot in every hammock, made the men lie down also, and kept the vessel as still and as motionless as a turtle asleep. She now shot a little ahead of the *Harrier*, which vessel up to this time had always maintained the superiority.

The breeze being fresh, the frigate lost no ground. She was leading the brigs away from their destination, but Bowling declared he would follow her to Pondicherry but that he would have a shot at her. By sunset, when the breeze died away a little, the brigs might have gained about two miles in the course of the day. The frigate was hull up; and as the night was fine, she was easily to be kept sight of. Towards dark the chase reduced her sail, evidently not caring how soon the brigs came up, but at the same time not losing any advantage offered by the wind to make good her voyage. Bowling watched the coolness with which the enemy treated him, and felt an eager wish to be alongside of the frigate, in his rage at the perfect indifference of the French captain.

'Doctor,' said he, 'I will have the English flag to that ship's gaff-end, or you may clap my head in a thirty-two pound carronade, and blaze at her for the last shot.'

'She is a fine ship, sir,' said the doctor, coolly, 'and she is about three times our size, with certainly three men to our one.'

'Yes, to our one, doctor,' said the captain; 'but there are two of us.'

'Are there, sir?' said the doctor, coolly.

'Now, boys,' said Patrick O'Leary, 'now you'll see the difference with your own eyes between the two nations; and I bet a week's allowance of grog, with enough baccy to last any man a month, that we have the most of the fun. Captain Whiskers there, that tearing fellow in harbour, does not seem to sail quite as well as he did. I should not wonder, boys, if some of his courage has not left him, and lightened his vessel abaft.'

'Oh, he'll do as well as his neighbours,' said one, more charitably disposed than O'Leary.

'Not the least doubt in life of it, boy; but I'll bet you the grog and the baccy we are first in and last out; that we have twice as many in the doctor's list; and that we fire twice as many shot. Now, there's a bet fit for any man who walked over the Curragh race-course, and bad luck to the Irishman who never saw the pride of the island!'

Bowling had scarcely ever been below. As for dinner, he did not seem to want that; he lived upon the anxiety which would have devoured him in time. He was dressed in a round jacket, with a glass under his arm; and every second he took a look at his huge enemy, with whom he was now gradually closing, whilst the *Harrier* seemed dropping astern in the lighter breeze, although she continued to carry sail.

'There's my post rank,' said Bowling to the first lieutenant, 'and your commander's commission within five miles of us; and we will put out a long hand to reach it!'

The first lieutenant, who partook of all the zeal which his captain imparted, and which, under such circumstances, always diffuses itself over the whole crew, was warm in the hope his captain inspired. He reported everything in readiness, and every precaution taken; and as Bowling inspected the quarters, and saw the eyes of his men bright with expectation, and fixed with confidence upon him, he felt assured that, great as were the odds against him, his chance was not desperate, if he was warmly seconded by the *Harrier*. And where is the captain in the navy who doubted the personal bravery of his companion?

It was now fast growing towards dark, but there was light enough for the *Harrier* to see the telegraph which communicated the first order he had given to the Hon. Captain Curlew:—'On closing with the enemy, engage on the starboard quarter, and retain that position.' He then hoisted his colours, and fired a gun.

The stranger took not the smallest notice; but, having taken a reef in his topsails, as some clouds looked rather threatening to windward, he again set his light sails, and continued his steady course.

Bowling's anxiety overcame his usual caution. 'Let us creep up close to her,' he said; 'we can reef topsails within the minute, and now we are gaining ground fast.'

The first lieutenant and the master both coincided in opinion that now was the best time to reef, as, the wind being light, it was not necessary to round to; whereas, if the breeze came on fresh, and it became absolutely necessary to round to, some distance might be lost. Besides, the *Harrier* was far astern; and without her aid, of course, Captain Bowling never anticipated going into action.

'Not close action,' said Bowling; 'but I should like to try the effect of that long nine-pounder upon her rigging. A chance shot might give us some advantage, besides which any other vessel crossing our track might be brought to our assistance by the report. For one French vessel in these parts, we have at least ten, and these are respectable odds in our favour.'

'But, sir,' urged the master, 'if the *Harrier* continues to drop astern, and the night should cloud over and become squally, the enemy might alter his course, and, although seen by us, might be unnoticed by Captain Curlew.'

'No fear of that, Mr. Fathom; no fear of that. I would burn blue lights, fire guns, set off rockets, and keep up such a blaze aloft as would make the black gentleman below look about him.'

As it was now so dark that any colours shown by the frigate would have been almost invisible to the *Echo*, the ensign was hauled down, every preparation for action made, and the watch below were desired to go to sleep.

You can order anything on board a ship. You can regulate the sun, make men sleep, shoot a star, command a master, and order a landsman to splice the mainbrace. No man has any idea of the power of a captain until he has taken a cruise with him.

On board the *Echo* everything was order, discipline, regularity, and duty; but on board the *Harrier* was the very reverse. A system of petty tyranny had existed ever since Curlew fitted her out. He had no knowledge, no practical knowledge of the service. He had been the pet child of fortune, nursed in luxury. Every captain with whom he had sailed had favoured him, and the officers of the watch, rather glad to get rid of such useless encumbrance on deck, or willing to pet the spoilt boy, sent him to bed; hence he had been absent during the many evolutions performed in sudden squalls, and in all those opportunities for acquiring nautical knowledge which are the seaman's best school. It is true the Admiralty had given him a most excellent first lieutenant; but someone having told Curlew that this gentleman was sent to take care of him, and see he did not get into mischief, the proud and conceited fool had taken an inveterate dislike to him.

To show his authority, he most pertinaciously opposed every proposition of the lieu-

tenant, and when he had done all the mischief he could, would walk below and desire the first lieutenant to set the ship to rights, and report when it was done. Now came his apprehension of himself, for self-confidence he had none.

'Why, I should like to know,' said he to the first lieutenant, 'am *I* to be stuck on the starboard quarter, and to maintain that position?'

'I have no doubt,' replied the officer, 'that Captain Bowling intends placing the *Echo* on the larboard quarter, so that the frigate cannot rake one vessel without exposing her stern to the other; and if both vessels keep a good look-out, they can anticipate any manœuvre, by watching the rudder of the enemy. If you like, sir, I will illustrate the beauty of the attack to you in a moment.'

'I am very much obliged to you indeed, sir, for your kindness, but I imagine the intricacies of such an attack adapted to the meanest capacity; and when I wish for an illustration, I shall be most happy to apply to you.'

It is ever so with ignorance and pride: the former fears being known, the latter fears control; and thus the poor wretch who walks about with such companions never gains the assistance of which he is so much in want. Curlew was most thoroughly detested; there was neither officer nor man who cared one straw about him beyond the respect which the service demanded to the uniform, and which respect was religiously paid to him, in order that those next in authority might exact it from their inferiors.

About eleven at night, Bowling had got close enough to the frigate to perceive she was under easy sail, apparently ready to receive a squall, which looked rather heavy to windward. He was aware he was within gunshot; and, by way of giving the *Harrier*, now out of sight astern, some idea of his situation, he desired the long nine-pounder to announce his vicinity to the enemy, which enemy evidently took very little notice of him.

The gun was fired, but it was not returned. The squall came closer, and now came a little instruction to Bowling. He had been warned, by the prudence of the frigate, to take his reef in at sunset, when the wind was light; now it became requisite to be done instantly, and long before it was so done, the squall took the frigate, which ship being only under her topsails and foresail, heeled over to the strong breeze, and, foaming through the water, soon increased her distance. The men were on the yards reefing the topsails, as the squall took the *Echo*. The sails became suddenly full, the canvas flew over the lee yardarm, and one man, whose hold was more slippery than his companions', was knocked overboard. At this moment the frigate, perhaps out of contempt for her tiny enemy, fired a shot, which passed over the *Echo*, and Captain Bowling found he had quite sufficient on his hands without returning the compliment.

The coolness of Bowling remedied all the disasters. A boat was down almost instantaneously; the seaman, although the squall was severe, and his chance desperate, was picked up; but before all was set to rights, and the *Echo* again in pursuit, the frigate had set the sails she could carry, and had left the brig far astern. Lights were shown, blue lights and rockets were fired at intervals, and every now and then a gun was fired, in order to warn the *Harrier* of the course steered by his senior officer.

These lights Curlew desired should not be answered, as he imagined it would give the enemy a knowledge of his distance from his comrade; and, in the event of Captain Bowling getting too close, the frigate might suddenly make an easy capture of the *Echo* first, and *Harrier* afterwards. These reasonings, which would have given satisfaction to the officers, he never condescended to make known; and to the first lieutenant's repeated question as to whether the signals should be acknowledged, the answer was invariably—'No.'

'Captain Bowling, sir,' said the officer, 'will imagine some accident has happened, and perhaps lose sight of the chase in waiting for us; if we were to show a single light from the spritsail yard-arm, it might be seen by the *Echo*.'

'I have given an answer, sir. Carry all possible sail.'

In the meantime the breeze increased; the *Harrier* was left further astern from her never reefing until the last possible moment; it was then a business of some time; a considerable quantity of ground was lost. Both the frigate and the *Echo* had long been out of sight; and murmurs, not loud, but very deep, were whispered through the *Harrier*.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN HOW ACTIVITY, VIGILANCE, AND PERSEVERANCE, MAY MAKE A SHANGALLA FLY A FORMIDABLE ANTAGONIST TO A RHINOCEROS.

WHEN the morning broke, the *Harrier* was barely in sight from the *Echo's* deck, and the French frigate was about five miles ahead of the *Echo*. As it was evident that the *Harrier*, in the strong breeze, was no rival to the *Echo* in sailing, and as Bowling had resolved to follow the frigate to China, or to Otaheite, or to any place she might be bound, and as he knew Captain Curlew had no instructions excepting to place himself under his orders, as soon as it was sufficiently clear, the signal was made—'In the event of

parting company, rendezvous at Portsmouth.' This would leave Captain Curlew quite his own master, a circumstance which neither Bowling nor his officers would much regret.

There are few things in life more exciting than a chase, especially when a superiority of sailing promises the first wish of a seaman's hope—a prize; but when every mile gained is to place you nearer the guns of a superior force, there is always, among the most prudent part of the crew, some very considerable apprehension that the sail so eagerly carried might be the means of wafting them to a prison.

The breeze freshened, the gallant little vessel carried her utmost sail, whilst the frigate, having such superior power, evidently increased her distance. The weather got cloudy and dark, and by sunset the *Harrier* was entirely out of sight. Captain Curlew, on finding himself 'monarch of all he surveyed,' hauled close on a wind, and having consulted his master, desired him to shape the best course he could for Portsmouth. The crew manifested some impatience as this order was given; and had not the first lieutenant exhibited great firmness, this impatience would have led to some symptoms not at all dissimilar to a mutiny.

'I wish the precious craft had capsized in the squall,' said one man.

'Bad luck to me,' said another, 'if I would not have given all my pay to have been sent, as a man to be hung, on board that *Echo*.'

'Do you think the *Harrier* ever sailed so bad before?' said another. 'Oh, but that trimming was done to a nicety, as the Spaniard said when he roasted the Mexican.'

'For my part,' said a fourth, 'I think we had better make a French vessel of her altogether, and then if we turn tail from an Englishman, small blame to us.'

It soon became apparent that the *Harrier* was almost in a state of mutiny. The continued punishments, the useless harassing services to which each in his turn was condemned, the absence of all real discipline, and the presence of petty tyranny, had been the cause of frequent murmurs, which spread from man to man, and might have been regarded by watchful officers with considerable alarm, as the moanings of a volcano indicate an irruption. During the time that the master shaped his course to get to Portsmouth, and during the necessary employment of the men in trimming sails, Captain Curlew was in his cabin with a small comb and wet brush, producing, to great effect, certain curls on his whiskers, not unfrequently during the interesting operation cursing the plebeian feet which trampled overhead.

Bowling was now alone, the close companion of a vessel three times his force. He calculated all his chances well and coolly. It was evident in the light breezes he had the advantage of sailing, and it was equally evident that in strong breezes the superior power of the frigate placed the advantage on the side of the enemy.

'To harass her, then,' he said to his officers, 'we must avail ourselves of the light winds, and as the breeze freshens we must increase our distance; it will never do to find her in chase of us in a strong breeze and head-sea. But her superiority, even in this weather, is not so great but that we can keep sight of her. And now to put my idea in motion and in action,' he continued, smiling; 'we are gaining on her fast, and directly we get within shot of her, we never will cease firing that long nine.'

As the breeze grew lighter, the *Echo* crept up faster until the one-gun exercise began. Shot after shot was fired, which went over the frigate, but not one struck her. It is not quite so easy a task as some imagine to hit a frigate, however large she may be, which is 'end on' to the marksman at the distance of a mile and a half, more especially when the vessel from which the gun is fired is rolling about in the long swell of an open sea. Every officer had a shot. It was very exciting, very amusing, but very unsatisfactory, for not the slightest notice was taken of this exercise for two hours, when a chance shot went through the main-topsail.

'Here's a dollar for you, my lad,' said Bowling, 'and I'll give five more to any man who can hit one of her masts.'

As this was a sure way of getting money in the event of success, without any loss if unsuccessful, the forecastle was lined by men all anxious for a chance; but the fun was soon over, for the frigate, thinking the little *Echo* close enough to her, suddenly shortened sail, rounded to, and trimmed sails in chase. This was done with considerable smartness; and the broadside which followed showed that some attention had been paid to the gunnery department.

It was now quite a different case; both vessels were close on a wind, the *Echo* being about a point before the beam of the frigate; the breeze was so light that both vessels carried their royals, and the distance between them so trivial, that the shot passed over and over. The French captain had evidently been disgusted at the impudence of the mosquitoes which hovered about him, buzzing and stinging at every opportunity; and although his orders were most imperative as to making good his passage, the light breeze tempted him to vary his course, in the hope of getting rid of this spy upon his action.

It was a most critical moment for Bowling. His short guns would hardly have reached, whilst the long eighteens of the frigate carried far beyond him.

'Grin and bear it!' said Patrick O'Leary; 'what's the use of striking at a man who is

out of reach of your short arms, when his long ones might claw hold of you? Isn't it better to follow Darby Malony's advice to the arms of the windmill?—"What's the use of tiring yourself, and wasting your strength with the wind?" said he. "Can't exactly say," said the windmill. "Then I'll tell you," said Darby; "if you ain't forced to do it, go to sleep."

Bowling heard this piece of advice, and turned it to some account. 'Avaust firing!' said he; 'let every man lie down on the deck. Keep her full, quarter-master; don't touch a sail; if we can forereach a little, we shall soon see him bear up again.'

Firing in a light breeze almost always produces a comparative calm. As the frigate fired her weather-guns, this had the above effect; whilst the *Echo*, far enough to windward to be out of the effect produced, was soon observed to draw the frigate well abaft her beam.

The French captain evidently took every precaution to capture the *Echo* in his power. No broadsides were fired, but each gun was carefully pointed, and coolly and deliberately discharged. A few shots struck the *Echo;* one or two touched her in the hull; and four or five had gone through her sails. 'Ready about!' said Bowling. 'Tack ship, Mr. Gangway;—those fellows have got a pretty accurate elevation with their starboard guns—we will alter our position, and give them a little exercise with their larboard gun.'

The *Echo* was round in a moment; and the frigate was soon seen, as the *Echo* drew abaft her beam, to be preparing for the same evolution.

'Where the devil can the *Harrier* be?' said one of the officers to the other. 'We ought to see her now; and both of us together might make a good stand against this Frenchman.' The masthead man was hailed to look out well on the lee-bow for the *Harrier;* midshipmen went aloft with their glasses;—but Bowling was quite right in his conjectures that Curlew had a sovereign aversion to restraint, and had availed himself of his liberty. As it was rather a ticklish moment with the *Echo*, her crew were not slow in conferring several very uncomfortable titles upon Curlew, and likening him to the bird whose name he bore wherever any noise disturbs the atmosphere.

It required some time to bring the larboard guns to the accuracy of those which had sent the shot into the hull of the *Echo;* but at last they began to fire pretty correctly. Bowling was averse to tacking again, as he made certain that if the *Harrier* had continued the chase, they must come in sight of her in an hour. He had increased his distance from the frigate so much that his carronades would not have reached; and the wind was fast dying into a calm.

'Just about as pretty a situation,' said Gangway to the master, 'as ever I remember to be in. If it falls a calm, that fellow will blaze away without interruption, and perhaps accommodate us with a little amusement in the shape of his launch, in a position where we shall be embarrassed to get a gun to bear; and as the doctor, who knows a tobacco-pipe from a boatswain's call, says "bodies in fluids attract each other," we might be drawn closer to those guns than even the captain might relish.'

'He's a fine fellow!' said the master, looking at him.

'And a handsome fellow!' said the doctor, joining in.

'And one who cares no more for an enemy three times his size, than a flea does for a dog in whose coat he conceals himself. By Jove! the man who could swim with a sword in his mouth to lead an assault against a battery won't quietly haul down that flag without a struggle.'

'Hoist out all the boats!' cried Captain Bowling; 'and get the sweeps ready, Mr. Gangway.'

'We have only two sweeps on board, sir,' replied Gangway.

'It's no use asking now why we have only two on board. Get the boats out and send them ahead to tow; we must creep further away from her, or we may be in a very uncomfortable situation. Masthead there! do you see the *Harrier?*'

'No, sir,' was the reply.

'How fast are we going through the water?'

'Not more,' said the master, throwing a rope yarn overboard, and watching it, 'than a knot an hour!'

'What is the frigate about?'

'She is getting her runners and tackles up, sir. She is going to hoist her launch out!'

'There never was an instance in the records of our history,' said the doctor, 'of a French vessel at sea attempting the capture of a man-of-war with boats. They don't like that at all.'

Long before the Frenchman had his launch out, all the boats of the *Echo* had her in tow. The two sweeps were got out, and it was evident that the brig was fast getting out of range altogether; indeed, the last shot fired had fallen short. A party of hands were now employed in getting ready a new main-topsail; and as the sails were of no use, it being a dead calm, the sail-makers were sent aloft to patch up where it was possible.

'Holloa!' exclaimed Bowling; 'here come the boats. Upon my soul, that French captain is a regular trump!'

'No man up to his neck in a pond in winter,' said Patrick O'Leary, who was standing at the wheel, 'ever was half so cool as that captain of ours.'

'Call the boats on board, Mr. Gangway; we can work her head round with the sweeps

—beat to quarters. I'll give those fellows such a reception, that they never will try an English man-of-war again.'

When the boats left the frigate they were cheered by their comrades; each party waved their hats, and the noise of this simultaneous roar reached the brig.

'Now, my lads,' said Bowling, 'we will wait until they come a little nearer before we give them a cheer—the nearer the better; they stand just about the same chance with us as we should single-handed against the frigate. Let's have no hurry—no confusion. Fire one gun at a time. Now begin from forward, and let's see where the first gun goes. Avaust firing—that shot went over them half a mile. Depress the next gun—now then!' The second shot went right in amongst the boats, and the third followed the second pretty accurately.

'Load the foremost guns with grape!' said Bowling.

'He's going to drink success to the French captain, with some of the English grape,' said O'Leary.

'Now then, my lads, before we begin in earnest, give those brave fellows three cheers.' And three cheers they gave, to which the French responded. 'That compliment's over; try them with a little grape.' The first shot fell, like a shower of hail, in amongst them, and confusion became evident. They separated instantly; the launch and another boat, both with guns, pulled away on the *Echo's* starboard bow, whilst the others pulled for the quarter, both evidently with the intention of taking up a position to use the long guns.

The sweeps altered the position of the brig; and one of the boats being sunk, the rest turned tail and pulled back to the frigate.

'Just in time, Gangway; here comes a catspaw on the water. I would have caught them all; pelt them back again until they are out of shot; it's capital practice, and we shall require all we can get.'

The catspaw heralded a breeze; and it soon freshened. The frigate at first trimmed her sails in chase; but as the breeze increased, she again bore up and made all sail; so did the *Echo*.

'I'll stick to her,' said Bowling, addressing his men, after his boats were hoisted in, congratulating them on their coolness: 'I'll stick to her, like a sucking-fish to a shark; and I'll serve as a pilot-fish to the first large vessel or small vessel we can find. I see I can trust to you; you are a gallant set of fellows; and I'll give you lots of opportunity of showing your courage. I am not going to splice the mainbrace, my lads; we must have no Dutch courage—everything must be done with coolness—we shall succeed before long, and then you shall all have your rewards.'

Suddenly the frigate hauled close on a wind; the *Echo* as instantly did the same. And as the wind was likely to increase, Bowling took a reef in with such celerity, that it must have been remarked.

'Here's something in the wind, I'm sure; look well out to leeward. Soundings, you have got an eye like a hawk; take my glass and sweep the horizon carefully.'

'There's a large vessel right to leeward of the frigate, sir! I can only just make her out.'

'Are you sure it is a ship?'

'Quite, sir; I can see between her sails.'

'Now then, it's my turn,' said Bowling. 'Edge away a couple of points. Look sharp, my lads, and get your dinners. In this breeze we are the fastest, Gangway; we must keep just out of point-blank range on that fellow's weather-bow; we must bring the long guns aft; and we must hammer away at him until we can touch a mast. I'll be to him what the trained hawk is to the antelope—I'll fix upon him until the other dog comes up.'

Bowling's spirits were now high indeed; he went to the masthead, satisfied himself the stranger was a man-of-war; and from the few ships the French had in those parts, he was sure of her being a friend. No precaution, however, was neglected; and so careful was he, that he hauled up for a quarter of an hour to see if changing the long guns aft was detrimental to the sailing of the *Echo*. He then edged away again; and having placed the *Echo* about two points on the Frenchman's bows, he began his annoyance. The cool deliberation of the aim; the small distance; the steadiness of the vessel in comparison to her motion in the light breeze, all contributed in his favour. The third shot passed through the foretopsail; and afterwards not a few holes were visible. The jib halyards were shot away; and whilst all these little annoyances tended to check the sailing of the Frenchman, the royal-sheets of the *Echo* were kept flying, as a signal to the ship to leeward, whilst the private signal was shown at the fore-royal head-mast.

The frigate soon felt the force, even of a brig, when well placed; and by way of getting rid of her for a moment, she tacked, firing her broadside as she came round. One accidental shot struck the *Echo's* main topmast; it tottered for a second, and then fell over the side.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH PEOPLE NOT CONVERSANT IN NAVAL TACTICS WILL BE MUCH PUZZLED, AND YOUNG OFFICERS MAY GET USEFUL HINTS WHILST THE AUTHOR IS SHOWING THAT BRAVE MEN ARE GENERALLY GENEROUS.

'ALL the better,' said Paddy O'Leary; 'it will cool the gun whilst we shift it.' Every man in the vessel seemed animated with the zeal of Bowling, and the spirit of O'Leary. The wreck was cleared away, and as soon as possible the *Echo* was round in pursuit of the frigate, which vessel now returned the compliment of the shots, having her little annoying adversary in the same position the *Echo* had maintained on the other tack.

'Let them blaze the muzzle of their guns off, and fire the tompions into the bargain; who cares for that, I should like to know?' said O'Leary; 'there it comes again, whistling like a boy with a hot murphy in his mouth. Ah, but you would like to swamp the little craft, you cursed parlez-vous! Don't go to sleep, lads. Clap on with a will. Never mind that shot, boys, it's gone after the fish, and small blame to the shark that swallows it for Bill Noodle's head.'

Although talking is against all orders and regulations in well-disciplined ships during the execution of any duty, yet there are times when a little animated remark is attended with the best possible effects; and, in a case like the present, a laugh at the shot, and a cheer for the action, contributed much to keep the enemy in ridicule, and the seamen alive to their duty.

The *Echo* wore round directly her maintop-mast fell, and of course dropped a long way astern, and out of shot before it was shifted; then again up went every stitch she could bear, and she again gained rapidly on the enemy. The ship to leeward seemed to have made out that something was going on in which she might take an advantageous part, and she carried a press of sail to near the strangers. Bowling kept at the longest possible range, so much so, indeed, that although the vessels were within shot of each other, neither party fired. The long nine was, however, kept on the forecastle to fire over all; and when the sun went down, more sail was set, and the *Echo* crept closer up.

Then again began the exerise from the one-gun battery. It would be more difficult for the frigate to hit a smaller vessel than for the smaller vessel to hit the larger one; besides, the guns continually firing would be a signal to the ship to leeward. The frigate in this assisted the brig, for she opened her guns that would bear from her stern-ports, in the hope of wounding a spar, and relieving herself of this her persevering little enemy. The night soon got dark; but the *Echo*, now within point-blank range, kept sight of her foe, letting off rockets at intervals, and firing her shotted gun. The French ship again tacked suddenly, but it gave her no advantage; the *Echo's* crew were at their stations, and the brig was round before the frigate. Of all animated chases this was the most so; each party in turn became the chaser; each had advantages to counterbalance the other. The superiority of sailing was, in this case, an equivalent for the superior force, as it became optional to engage or not. The *Echo*, fearing a chance shot might hit her, and thus make her an easy prize, kept, whilst the frigate had her on her weather bow, out of range. Now she burnt blue lights from the lee mainyardarm, she let off rockets at intervals, and, although out of shot, she fired a shotted gun every ten minutes.

The French captain seemed now embarrassed how to act. It was evident the vessel to leeward gained upon him, and it was equally evident he could not get rid of the *Echo*. He tacked again, and his watchful adversary did the same. Throughout the whole night, in which the breeze continued steady, this manœuvre was resorted to. Once he edged away, endeavouring to gain a greater distance by running free; but here again he found himself closely followed, and altered his course.

No hare, hard pressed by the unrelenting enemies of its species, ever doubled about to deceive her pursuers more cautiously than did the French frigate, and each symptom of unsteadiness of purpose only gave his adversary an advantange. At day-dawn both vessels were in sight: — the *Echo* on his weather quarter, about two miles distant, and the frigate to leeward, hull up, under every stitch of sail she could carry. No sooner was she plainly perceptible than the private signal was made by the *Echo*, and answered. The next signal was, 'The stranger is an enemy;' and after exchanging numbers, Bowling had the supreme satisfaction of seeing the signal made by Sir John Jervis at the frigate's masthead — 'Your great zeal I have noticed.' He rubbed his hands with delight as the midshipmen reported the number; it needed no book, everybody recollected it, and, as an answer, more sail was made upon the *Echo*.

The frigate was the *Seine*, a ship inferior in size and tonnage to her huge adversary, but with a crew so disciplined that they made up for a deficiency in guns and men by their skill. As it was evident that she had a most decided superiority of sailing, she did not check Bowling's determination of bringing on an action as soon as possible. He ran the *Echo* within point-blank range, then put his helm down, and fired his whole broadside. Although many shots passed through the sails, for the order was to fire aloft, no spar came down. The *Echo* immediately luffed up and prepared to try the

chance again—this time double shotting the guns, and creeping up within musket-shot; again she luffed up, and again she fired.

The French captain could stand this no longer. He resolved to punish his little antagonist, even if he was afterwards forced to fight the frigate. Success emboldens men: twice had the manœuvre been tried, and the holes in the canvas showed how well directed the guns were.

'A little closer this time, Soundings,' said Bowling.

The cautious old seaman remonstrated. Already the musket balls fired from the troops on board the Frenchman had whistled over their heads, and the stern chaser had delivered some grape in a very unsatisfactory manner on board the *Echo*.

'I'll go,' said Bowling, 'close enough to chuck a biscuit on board of her. What does it signify supposing she does dismast us? The *Seine* is sure of her; and anything which brings the action on ensures her capture.'

'We shall damage her as much at this distance, sir,' said the master, 'as we should alongside; and more so since our object is to cut away a mast.'

'Well, well, I suppose I must listen to reason. Take that poor fellow below:' one of the seamen had been wounded by a musket ball. 'Look out, my lads; stand by with the larboard guns' (each vessel was on the larboard tack, the *Echo* being on the enemy's weather quarter). 'Keep her full for a moment.'

'As full as a rum-cask, your honour, before the purser's steward——'

'Silence, O'Leary!' said the master; 'nothing off!'

'Luff it is; and there's a shot from the frigate to leeward.'

It was evident the captain of the *Seine* was anxious to see how far he could assist his gallant companion, and he fired this shot to ascertain his distance; it fell over her.

'Oh, Gangway, I can't stand this; the *Seine* is within shot. We must make an attempt to make her shorten sail;—stand by, my lads!'

At this moment, just as the *Echo* was about to luff up, being close up, the frigate put her helm down, to avoid being raked; the *Echo* put hers up, and the frigate discharged her broadside. Had there been as much coolness in the direction of the fire as there had been in seizing the moment for the manœuvre, the little *Echo* might have been sunk. As it was, she was almost cut to pieces in her sails, although not a mast or yard was touched. She fired her own broadside, and followed it up quickly with another.

The man at the helm of the French frigate was wounded; and the captain, anxious to get another broadside to finish the brig, called to his men to be quick and load. The master, who it appears was not very collected, bobbed his head to the shot; and the frigate, instead of having her helm shifted, and paying off on the larboard tack, was coming round. To obviate this, the captain desired the first lieutenant to box her off; and between the helm being one way, and the head-yards braced aback, the frigate got in irons. This scene of confusion was made worse from the firing of the brig, which gallant little craft, putting her helm up gently, ran past the stern, raked her antagonist, and putting her helm down, in the confusion, shot past the frigate broadside, and as she fell off was on her starboard bow.

'Now for it, Soundings, before the frigate gathers way; up with the helm.' The brig paid off instantly, and Bowling ran right foul of the frigate's bowsprit, and carried it away. The foretopmast came down by the run, and the *Echo* was across her adversary's bow, fixed—immovable.

The Frenchmen instantly attempted to board, and the crew of the brig as steadily resisted all attempts. Fortunately the frigate, from the position of her sails, and not having any way, was unable to start ahead, or the *Echo* would have been cut in halves, or swamped. The fire of the musketry from the frigate's forecastle was terrific; the men crept close under the bulwarks, and thus some protection was afforded. In the meantime, the sails of the *Echo* being full, paid the bows of the frigate round off with her head in the direction of the *Seine*, which ship had tacked, and was now looking up for the combatants. The *Echo* swung round on the frigate's larboard broadside; and, as the Frenchman shot ahead, the poor little craft, perfectly dismasted—not a stick standing—drifted clear of her huge adversary. Bowling ran to a gun, and took a parting shot, and then desired the flag to be stuck on a boat-hook, and lashed to the quarter; whilst he bent the flags of the signal—'Not requiring immediate assistance,' and managed to show it to the *Seine*. That gallant frigate was now ranging up. The Frenchman, although he had lost his bowsprit and foretopmast, had squared his after-yards, and was running down to the *Seine* before the wind, this being the only method by which he could keep good way on his vessel without running the chance of being thrown into the wind and becoming unmanageable.

'Let's heave to, and look at the fun,' said O'Leary, who stood by the useless wheel of the dismasted brig; 'that wounded bird will never escape, anyhow.'

The anxiety of all was intense. Bowling cursed his foremast, which hung over the starboard side with all the sails, a fit companion for the mainmast and gaff. Only the bowsprit was left; and in spite of his endeavours to get something like a boat-sail

hanging from that, the *Echo* remained immovable.

Although the axes were called for, and orders given to clear the wreck, every man but the wounded suspended all their exertions to watch the rencontre. The *Seine* shortened sail with a steadiness seldom surpassed, and then edged away to cross the French frigate's bows. This she effected, raking her as she passed. The *Seine* then put her helm up, and took her station on the larboard bow of the Frenchman, at about a quarter pistol-shot. The French frigate fought with the resolution of heroes; the *Seine*, with the cool determination of English seamen. The guns of the enemy seemed to be as quickly fired as those of her adversary, but the effect of the latter was evident. It was not long before the crew of the *Echo* gave a simultaneous cheer: the maintopmast of the Frenchman fell, and fell inboard; and in ten minutes afterwards the foremast went, close to the board; and the mizen-mast directly afterwards. Still she fought, and fought bravely; but in the confusion the helmsman was killed, and the vessel—for the helm was a little aport, which the weight of the wounded man occasioned—came to the wind on the starboard tack, and lay a log in the trough of the sea. All opposition now was useless. The *Seine* hauled to the wind, not having lost a mast or yard; and on her shooting up alongside the French frigate, the latter, by means of an officer on the cat-head, gave notice that she had surrendered.

The *Seine* shot past her, and tacked. She never sent a man on board; but, with the generosity which always accompanies bravery, stood up to the *Echo*, took her in tow, and towed her down to where the French frigate lay, dismasted and captive. The boat of the *Seine* was sent for Captain Bowling to take possession, which he did, although the French officer refused to give up his sword to him.

'You occasioned my capture,' he said, 'and a more gallant officer is not in the English navy; but my honour forbids me surrendering my sword to a force so inferior, and one which never could have succeeded but for the presence of that frigate.'

Bowling took him by the hand, and desired an interpreter to make known how much he esteemed his conduct throughout the action. He took him in the boat, and the sword was delivered to the senior officer.

The crew of the *Seine* cheered Bowling as he stepped up the side; and however ungracious this spontaneous effusion of congratulation might have been to the French captain, it could not fail to be flattering to the brave fellow to whom it was intended as a welcome. But when Bowling's long chase, and his determined perseverance, were made known (not from Bowling's lips, but from the *Echo's* log), the brave captain of the *Seine* was resolved to do him justice, which he accordingly did, in his despatch.

The French captain having been shown below to the cabin, the captain of the *Seine* took the opportunity of presenting Bowling, on deck publicly, with the sword, which the good taste of Bowling prompted him to send immediately on board the *Echo*. The prisoners were removed, and the *Vengeance* was manned from the *Seine*. In the meantime, the crew of the brig had not been idle; the wreck was cleared away, and, with the assistance of forty men sent from the *Seine*, the little vessel was soon under jury-masts.

'You may write the despatch yourself, Captain Bowling,' said the senior officer.

'I would rather be excused,' replied Bowling; 'for if I did, I certainly should not mention myself.'

'Then I will do it, and do you justice.'

When the despatch was written, it was handed to Bowling; and he was evidently more overcome by the praise he there received than he was by the broadside of the frigate. Every justice had been done him; his perseverance during the chase—his unremitted vigilance—his care in making known his situation throughout the night—and the spirited manner in which he harassed his huge adversary night and day. But when it came to that part when he intentionally ran foul of the frigate, determined rather to sacrifice the brig than that the frigate should have a chance of escape, the courage which prompted the action—the steady manner in which it was executed—the determination with which he repelled the broadsides—and the dismantled hulk he rolled away from his crippled enemy, were dwelt upon with all the force of language which the captain of the *Seine* could command, and which he admitted fell far short of his desire to impress upon their lordships the value of an officer such as Captain Bowling. He recommended him strongly for promotion; gave him the despatches to take himself; hardly mentioned his own exertions, excepting so much as showed the bravery of his own officers and men; and, after remaining twenty-four hours in company, he made the signal for Bowling to make the best of his way to England, having, as he said, made the most valuable friendship in the navy.

The jury-masted *Echo* was soon under canvas; the dead were committed to their watery graves with due and proper solemnity; the wounded were soon convalescent under the care of the doctor, who had taken a very leading part in the action, occasionally preferring the quarter-deck to the cockpit; and with expectations justly high, and love stimulating her captain to make the best of his voyage, the *Echo* arrived in safety at Spithead, and was ordered instantly into harbour, to be docked and refitted.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH SOME DESCRIPTION IS GIVEN OF THE WAY TO RETAIN A POLITICAL PLACE, AND THE MEANS TO PUSH ON A WORTHLESS MEMBER OF ANY PROFESSION, WITH REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT ELOPE WITH ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE.

AT Spithead lay the *Harrier;* and if the manifestations of regret of her crew were loudly expressed when Curlew gave over the chase, and hauled his wind, they were much more so when they saw their companion come to an anchor under her jury-masts, her sails all patched, her sides none the better for the repairs, at least as to appearance, and an ensign at her gaff-end almost in ribbons from musket-balls. The news was rapidly conveyed round the fleet, and the crew of the *Harrier* regretted not having disobeyed every order to have been present at this gallant enterprise. The *Vengeance* had accompanied the *Echo* to Portsmouth; and when the brig stood in with the *Vengeance* astern, with the English colours over the French, it was believed by the *Harrier's* crew that she had succeeded without any assistance. Fortunately for Captain Curlew, he was in London, and Lord Seagull was hard at work to procure the promotion of his son. Unfortunately for that slip of aristocracy, he had arrived at the Cape after its capture, and there was no possible claim for the advancement, saving that which has ever influenced a first lord, and ever will as the Government becomes more corrupt and less able to maintain its position—parliamentary interest. Curlew was at this time about to be returned for a rotten borough; and then with Seagull's interest in one house, and Curlew's in the other, there was no doubt but what the first lord 'would listen to reason,' and make that insufficient officer a post-captain.

Seagull and his hopeful son were at breakfast in Grosvenor Square, when, before the paper was sufficiently aired, the coffee and politics were under discussion.

'We must finish this business to-day,' said his lordship; 'if they do not consent to give you your post rank, we must oppose them in this grant they seem so anxious to clutch. I have the command of one vote in the lower house, and by the day after to-morrow I hope to see you there ready to back up your own interest. The new writ will be applied for to-night.'

'Anything for a quiet life,' answered Curlew, yawning; ''gad, I was as sick of the sea as I was formerly sea-sick. If I could get my step, so that those beneath me could not pass me, then there would be some little satisfaction in hearing of the death of older officers, and the promotion of others, the latter pushing you up the list, as the elderly gentlemen considerately make way for you. I cannot endure a parcel of upstart fellows, who never had either father or mother, yet were born somehow, getting the start of us from some lucky circumstances, like that fellow Bowling, with whom I sailed from the Cape in the very dirty gun-brig to which I was appointed. He stands in by accident towards Martinique; he sees Sir John Jervis's fleet, runs in, takes an insignificant part in the action, sends the admiral a turtle, and gets promoted. I find him, when I arrive at the Cape, with a reputation hastily made for some trifling exertions on shore; and if he had been particularly mentioned in the despatch, his post-step might have followed. The service to those men is a bed of roses; they have board and lodging provided, servants in round jackets, and indulge in hot port, and occasionally weak claret.'

'Ah, ah!' said his hopeful father, with a smile, 'something of that is true enough; for when your service was short of midshipmen, it became necessary to take good-looking boys from before the mast and shopkeepers' sons, whose fathers thus compromised their bills with the captain. These young lads, if they failed to die of the yellow fever, or the enemy's shot, crept up the list, wondering at their own advancement. It has become requisite to infuse some noble blood in this decidedly noble profession, and therefore what Dr. Johnson said of a nobleman who wrote a book, and thus made authors generally more respectable, "that whatever a nobleman wrote should be received with respect," is applicable here; so any nobleman entering your service should be rewarded for the sacrifice of comfort he makes by a speedy advancement. This is my idea; and if I hold the situation of first lord, of course I shall act upon that principle, and after diligently providing for every branch of my own family, I shall advance those of any other peer who, by his patriotism, has devoted a son to the interest of his country.'

Having delivered himself of this long speech with the ease and volubility of a practised speaker, Lord Seagull turned over the newspaper to read the report of his own speech, which, he assured his son, brought down thunders of applause, and astounded the prime minister by its point and its research.

'Nothing in the paper,' said the peer, throwing it away, and continuing his breakfast.

'Is there a list of the people at the levée, or an account of the company at Lady Harriet Pennywhistle's?'

'Ah! those are important documents, and serve to show who are admitted within the pale of honourable society. I foresee, however, that society will become like the circles of water occasioned by a stone thrown therein; the first will extend itself until it

reaches that occasioned by a pebble, which breaks through one part of the large circle, and forms a part of itself inside the other; and hence infusion after infusion, until the whole will become so mixed that the nobility will vanish by its own extension, and the admission of plebeian blood into its circulation.'

'Quite impossible,' said Curlew; 'the aristocracy of England will never lower itself to this degradation.'

'There will be a new aristocracy of riches: money is everybody's god, more or less; and whenever I hear a man saying "he has enough" of that which I believe the love of to increase, as we learnt at school, in proportion to the increase of the money itself, I know he is going to rob me or some one else. It is on the principle that "when a man talks of his honesty, put your hand in your pocket, or he will take the liberty of dipping in his.'

'Lord Harry Hardhead was at the levée; his reputation is made; the elopement with his friend's wife establishes him a lion for ever,' said Curlew, as he ran his eye down the list. 'The wound must have been slight, and the woman easily gained.'

'Not so,' observed Seagull; 'no man elopes with a married woman who does not bitterly repent it within a week. At first, it is, as Hudibras says, "all fire and tow;" but when the woman sees the position she has lost, from a point so far beneath where she originally stood—when her own sex forsake her—her honour is tainted—her name disgraced—her children forsaken, she grows naturally discontented and morose; whilst the man, having gathered the once tempting fruit, becomes satiated with the enjoyment, and grows indifferent. He finds himself under all the miseries of marriage, without any of its respectability or its comforts; and if he marries the woman afterwards, thus endeavouring to put a thin coat of whitewash over his former folly, he marries her from a point of honour, not from affection. Never do that, William; a comfortable and discreet intrigue is sanctioned by the laws of society—for it is never a blot, as backgammon players say, until it is hit. But to lumber one's self with another man's heavy baggage is as absurd in a traveller, as in a man of fashion;—it's unpardonable—I was going to say, ungenerous—only I know there are many husbands who would thank the greater fool than himself who relieved him of his burden.'

'Confusion!' roared Curlew, starting up as if he had sat upon a hot pin.

'What's the matter?' said Lord Seagull, quietly. 'You have not encumbered yourself with another man's wife, have you? If in low life—money, my dear boy——'

'Curse the wife!' said the impatient captain. 'I would rather have eloped with all the wives of a troop of dragoons, than seen this——'

'What?' asked the father.

'Despatches have this day been received,' began Curlew, his lips livid with rage, 'from Captain David Milne, of his Majesty's ship the *Seine*, detailing the capture of the French national frigate the *Vengeance*, of which the following is a copy.'—Here he read over hurriedly the whole account. He stammered with rage as he read the just praise bestowed upon Bowling; he crushed the paper in his hand when he came to the termination of the letter, and saw underneath that Captain Bowling had been promoted to the rank of post-captain, and his first lieutenant promoted to the command of the *Echo*. 'There!' cried Curlew—'there's the very fellow I told you of;—shot past me—my senior officer for ever. Curse the service! I'll leave it to-morrow—I'll do something desperate—I'll——'

'Do anything, my boy, but commit suicide, or elope with another man's wife. Leave this business to me. If I can get the first lord to promote you to-day, he can place your name one above his on the list; these things are not so desperate as they look—it is frequently done, and on this occasion it must be done. But, you see, William, this is your own fault; your anxiety to be freed from his control made you give up the chase, or you would have shared in this action, perhaps have taken her before the *Seine* hove in sight. You see how diligently he pursued his enemy. I must say, however much I may enter into your feelings at finding this "nobody" placed above you, I cannot help admiring his courage and perseverance; and I think if I had been first lord of the Admiralty, I should have actually promoted him myself.'

'Indeed!' said Curlew; 'then curse me if I would. And the luck of the fellow!—not even wounded—not a leg or an arm missing, or a scar on his face. Well, well, it is an old saying, and a true one—the devil's children have the devil's luck.'

Lord Seagull never noticed this last allusion to himself; but being a man of some sense and discretion, although he actually was believed to be the father of Curlew, he retired to his own room, and began to plot political evils. He was much attached to his son, and did not see the blemishes of his character: his pride—for he had great pride—mingled itself with his son's relative to this promotion; and he could ill brook that a man, almost without a name, should push himself forward when all his interest failed in an equally rapid promotion for his son.

Curlew was in a regular rage; and having a black and tan dog beside him, he kicked it till it got out of his reach, and abused his servant till he was tired. The post brought

him a letter from his first lieutenant, stating the progress of the *Harrier's* refit; likewise the entrance of the *Echo* into harbour, with an account of the cheer that saluted her as she passed the entrance; her appearance under jury-mast; the size of the *Vengeance*, and a vast number of other equally unsatisfactory matters, purposely conveyed to him by one who had lost his promotion by the foolish pride, or more criminal act, of his commander. The last part of the letter was the most annoying;—orders had been sent to use every despatch in the refitting of the *Harrier;* and report, with its open mouth, declared her destination to be the East Indies. Curlew sent the letter to his father, with his compliments, that he had made up his mind never to go to sea again in that unfortunate vessel.

There is no difficulty which interest cannot overcome in a corrupt government;—those who hold their places for the sake of the salaries, and who only think of weathering out the next quarter-day, are alike destitute of patriotism or of honour. Lord Seagull made it a positive *sine qua non* that his son should instantly be promoted, or he would withdraw himself and his influence in the lower house from the government. What cared he for the welfare of the state? And charity, that loudly-chanted virtue, began at home. The first lord made some few difficulties, of course, more to enhance the favour. The debate was to come on that night, and the majority was certain; but to oblige an old friend, a staunch upholder of their party, sacrifices must be made, and Captain Curlew should be promoted.

'My lord,' said Seagull, 'I have the greatest confidence in your promise; and since you accord me the favour, perhaps you will allow me the pleasure of presenting my son with the commission?'

'I have not the least objection, my dear lord, not the least; indeed, I can well enter into your feelings, and share with you the delight you will experience in seeing the satisfaction of your son. I will ring the bell, and order the commission to be filled up.'

'Another favour, my lord,' said Seagull; 'and yet it can hardly be called a favour; my son's birthday occurred last Saturday. Would your lordship allow the commission to be dated on that day?'

'Decidedly, Seagull, decidedly; a day or two more or less makes no difference.'

'My son recommended to your lordship his first lieutenant; but of course he does not press that upon you now; another time—a year or so, at your lordship's best convenience.'

'The writ for your borough, Seagull, will be moved for to-night, I believe.'

'It will; and Curlew will give every support to the Government under any question. I pledge you my honour, my lord,' and here the grateful Lord Seagull placed his right hand upon the place under which he believed his heart to beat—'that under every emergency, under every circumstance, we will support the Government.'

The first lord rang his bell; and a commission, dated the week previous, and signed by two of the junior lords, was soon handed to the man dressed in a little brief authority. He scrawled his name, leaving the parchment to dry whilst he continued a trifling conversation, thereby not exactly showing how sincerely he wished his visitor anywhere but where he was.

'I have quite forgotten this lieutenant's name.'

'Goodall, my lord.

'Who *is* he, Seagull? do you know?'

Lord Seagull gave an expressive shrug of the shoulders, which conveyed at once the intimation that he was a man of no birth, family, or fortune; and that if he were hung, drowned, or promoted, it was all the same to him; he had done all he could for his son—and that shrug did all the harm the most eloquent discourse could have effected for the poor friendless fellow, whose name he had used merely to abate his influence for him, if he could gain the point for his son.

Curlew, being an idle man, was very anxious to get rid of himself; but when we are idle we carry about ourselves, in spite of all exertion to get rid of the burden. Then how long, how tediously long, is the day; how assiduously we endeavour to kill time; and how we waste our lives in useless frivolity to get through the hours between breakfast and dinner! Curlew sallied forth, followed by his black and tan spaniel; but, from the time he shut the door until he knocked at it again, he never once bestowed a look upon the faithful animal who followed his steps with an affection no cruelty could diminish. He was a thorough tyrant in his heart: a kick was the reward for the eager caress of the poor spaniel, which, in spite of the reproof, laid down to receive the lash his hard-hearted master might inflict. He crouched with fear, but still followed the footsteps of his wanton persecutor. Curlew stopped at every shop; looked at every woman who passed; intended to go in one direction; turned short round in the contrary way if any object attracted him. Every shop had some share of his attention. For five minutes he would gaze in at a silversmith's window; the brilliant ornaments for the table which met his view made him half determine to purchase a set-out for his ship; and, as money was no object, he actually gratified that wish. He next passed a bookseller's: with books he was unacquainted, but it was requisite to have some; so he stepped in and ordered several pages of the bookseller's catalogue, chosen at random—a very strange collection for a man of fashion; for it consisted principally of abstruse works on medicine and mathematics, with various

editions of spelling-books, dictionaries, and grammars.

The bookseller smiled; Curlew left his address, and tried some other shop. Thus he continued, from shop to shop, throwing away money on things he did not understand, and could not require. At three o'clock he rode, or rather sat, on his horse, half asleep and quite stupid; and when the animal, participating in the dulness of its rider, got just as drowsy, excitement in the shape of tyranny came to rescue the rider from sleep, and he dug his sharp spurs into the generous animal's side. Then he would gallop; and as the poor spaniel used his best endeavours to keep pace with the horse, and was failing, the groom was desired to ride behind the dog and flog him on.

At dinner, he was another man: excited by gluttony, he was always lively until he had stuffed himself to repletion; but when, after dinner, his father produced his commission, and mentioned the cautious manner in which he had gained his point, Curlew could not restrain his joy. 'Now, curse him!' he said, meaning Bowling, 'he shall never make the signal to me—"In case of parting company, rendezvous at Portsmouth!" Only let me get him under my orders, he shall see how quietly I have nursed my revenge for the insult that gallipot of a doctor of his inflicted on me!' And thus, with a smile, such as the devil might wear when he succeeded in tempting a saint, this nice young English gentleman actually patted his dog's head, and drove down to a theatre without ever once thanking his father.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN WHICH MORE THAN ONE PERSON MAKES A FOOL OF HIMSELF, THE AUTHOR NOT EXCEPTED.

THE return of post brought down Captain Bowling's commission, appointing him to the *Thames* frigate, then undergoing a thorough refit in Portsmouth harbour. Loud were the cheers of his crew when the tidings were made known; and as it happened on Saturday night, a splice of the main brace, the one promised during the chase of the *Vengeance*, was given by Bowling.

In those times, for we are now in 1801, it was customary for women to be admitted on board the ships; and few can tell, and none can imagine, the scenes which generally followed the admission of these degraded creatures—drunkenness was the lightest offence against morality. The ship was more like a den of furies and harpies, with men made beasts, than the resort of discipline, order, and sobriety. It was, perhaps, wisely done in one respect, for it prevented desertion; and in those times of stirring war and active service, desertion was a calamity not easily repaired. The men were the outcasts of prisons—fellows who, in the times of our savage penal code, had just weathered the gallows, and bore up, as the next and easiest resource for the navy. These, intermixed with the good old, noble, generous tar, placed the sailor sometimes in a bad position. To retain this heterogeneous mixture in some degree of security, it was absolutely necessary to provide them on board with the only pleasures they sought for on shore. Hence the introduction of women, dancing, and liberty-liquor; but as for 'liberty,' it was only in the song,—

'For none are so free as we sons of the wave.'

Captain Bowling announced the promotion of Mr. Gangway, and with it paid him the compliment 'that he could not himself have conscientiously accepted his commission without the man from whom he had received so much assistance had likewise been rewarded for his services.' They shook hands, the crew cheered, and the women shouted.

'I hope your honour will not lave an ould follower behind,' said Patrick O'Leary.

'I will apply to the admiral, O'Leary, to take you with me as my servant, and I dare say there will be no objection.'

'Plase your honour, I wants to be married.'

'Married, O'Leary! a man like you married!—why, it will ruin you for ever. What are you to do with a wife?'

'By my sowl, sir, I'll do as well as I'm able, and, I suppose, as most other people do.'

'It's a great folly, O'Leary,' replied Bowling; 'you will sacrifice half your pay as an allotment; and what use is a wife to you at Portsmouth, when you are perhaps in America? Who is to look after her in your absence? If you are away, O'Leary, the cat may play.'

'It's entire botheration anyhow, your honour. Och, it's myself that's fairly over head and ears in love, and, your honour, I've pledged her my troth. I couldn't tell her to box her trotters and take herself out of my sunshine.'

'You must do as you like, I suppose, O'Leary; but I tell you this spice of my mind, which you will not easily forget:—As sure as you marry you'll repent it—you are a fool, an idiot! Who is the girl?'

'She's living with me on board, your honour, and where's the difference between my situation now and when I'm married?'

'It's no use talking to an Irishman about a woman, or about discretion. You will marry her, I see, so I shall not waste my time in endeavouring to be of service to you.'

'Many thanks to your honour; it's to-morrow I'll be after being blessed, as Lucy

says. Och, the blessings of ould Ireland upon her beautiful black eyes ;—och hone!' and out went Patrick O'Leary with his blood at fever heat, and his tongue wagging in praise of about as abominable a creature as ever danced at Point.

In the meantime, Bowling had written and obtained leave for a fortnight ; and if O'Leary the servant was in love, he had a master not very differently situated in that respect. Having obtained leave, Bowling, before departing from Portsmouth, hoisted his pendant, read his commission, and was duly installed as captain of his Majesty's frigate the *Thames*. He desired any communication which might require an answer to be sent to the post-office at Exeter ; and having purchased a suit of plain clothes, he placed himself inside of the coach, and away he went on a love speculation.

O'Leary, who lived on shore with him, at his lodgings, was left behind ; and no sooner was the captain's back turned, than he went on board and asked every blessed soul of the whole ship's company to come to his wedding. The character of O'Leary had been communicated from the *Echo* to the *Thames*. The first lieutenant was given to understand that O'Leary's bravery and talent had given him a peculiar licence ; and, wishing to make acquaintance with him, he sent for him on the quarter-deck, and asked if the captain was gone.

'He just is, yer honour; and mighty pleasant it was to see him make acquaintance with himself before a big glass. Anyhow, he'll know his coat again, for he turned it about like a Jew what's going to buy a second-hand one, and when he got in it, he lost sight of himself altogether, and said he was a shore-going gentleman.'

'Where is he gone to?' asked the first lieutenant.

'To his own blessed ruin, yer honour ; he's gone after a woman, and I think he's left another behind, for all the morning he's been singing, with a voice like a mother Cary's chicken in a breeze, "Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again." I'm just thinking, yer honour, he'll not be invited to supper, if he brings any more company than himself.'

'Do you think he's going to be married?'

'I just do, yer honour, because, when I asked him to let me get married, he quietly called me a fool and an idiot ; and I've always remarked that those men are most clamorous against others who have committed the same fault themselves.'

'Very well,' said the first lieutenant ; 'and when are you to be married?'

'To-morrow's blessed sun will see me blessed, as Lucy calls it.'

'Do you love her, O'Leary?' inquired the first lieutenant, with a smile.

From the very bottom of my heart,' replied O'Leary, as he put his immense hand upon his stomach.

The first lieutenant laughed outright, and walked away, giving his orders.

O'Leary went on board the *Thames* to take a survey of the captain's cabin and the steward's berth. The latter was a good-sized cabin on the starboard side of the steerage, in which there was plenty of room, as he remarked, for Mrs. O'Leary to dance a jig without breaking the crockery. As for the captain's cabin, that was a particular palace, very much deserving his approbation.

The new captain of the *Echo* was well aware that he could trust many of his men on shore. It was an honour to belong to the *Echo ;* and all the women (those women make a man's fame) cheered the seamen of the gallant little craft, and were all anxious to be noticed by them. Whether this arose from admiration of their bravery, or a knowledge of their probable amount of prize-money, is difficult to determine. Worldly aggrandisement, or the increased possession of wealth, is very consonant with the ideas of all. About twenty men had permission to go on shore for twenty-four hours, and before they were landed they were all mustered on deck. They were fine, hardy fellows ; complexions as dark as mahogany ; most undeniable tails ; the front hair in curls ; neck exposed ; long-quartered shoes ; and with enough canvas in their inexpressibles to cap-size a jolly-boat. Every man's cheek seemed as if he put an apple in his mouth, the quid being a never-failing companion. They all wore stockings ; but as to gloves, Jack would as soon think of dipping his feet in wooden shoes, as his hands in leather.

Patrick O'Leary met them as they landed. Lucy was too modest to be looked at before her marriage, but supper was prepared at the Tar Ashore ; and to that 'illegant abode,' as O'Leary termed it, they directed their steps.

'There's the *hotel*,' said O'Leary, as he pointed to a shabby-looking house, with a sign as large as the front door. There was on it a ship sailing away in a stiff breeze, with a sailor, who had got his arm round the waist of a woman, waving his red handkerchief.

'How she's a-sailing, Tom, isn't she? shipping the seas over the weather chesstree, and carrying her canvas like that *Vengeance!*'

'And do you see, Ben, they've left that shipmate behind because he broke his liberty-leave ; and there he is, poor fellow, left ashore, to be devoured by savages. It's of no use your waving the red rag, my lad ; the captain's resolved to punish you, and some land-shark will be on board of you before sunset.'

It was quite evident these jolly dogs were not blessed with many poetical ideas. They never imagined that the red kerchief being

waved was a signal of the parting of friends, and that the grief of the tar ashore was for the loss of his shipmates.

'D—n me if I'd be left ashore,' said one, 'for all the women alive! Why, a fellow can't stir an inch without being in danger of losing the number of his mess. What with the horses, carts, dogs, men carrying sacks, coaches, butchers' boys, and women, one's obliged to keep every man constantly at his station, and to be tacking and wearing to get out of their way, like a craft beating through the Straits of Babelmandeb. That's the place, Tom, where the trees are so close to the shore that the monkeys get their tails in the blocks.'

'Start ahead, shipmate! said a fellow, rolling a wheelbarrow full of oranges, 'and save the tide. Oranges oh! two a pen-*ny*, two a pen-*ny*!'

'Holloa!' cried Tom; 'here's a fellow laden with red-hot shot running starn on to us; blowed if I don't board him. None of your pooping me with that revolving bowsprit of yours; or I'll fire my stern chasers into you!'

Out of the way, my lads!' said the man. 'Two a pen-*ny*, two a pen-*ny*!'

'Blessed if I don't teach you better manners than that, anyhow! Do you think the roadstead's only for you to anchor in? Send us a hand here, Bill!' Upon which two or three of the men clapped the vendor of fruit upon his own wheelbarrow, and, running him along a few paces, capsized him and his oranges into the gutter.

'You'll larn manners, my lad, another time, and not come shouting, like a Frenchman's crew, alongside the naval department. Pick up your shot, and make sail in another direction.'

There was likely to have been a row had not one or two of the softer sex gently entwined their delicate arms round the necks of the seamen, and requested, in the most harmonious voices and delicious cadences, that they would let the rum chap in the gutter go to the devil, whilst they went to the Tar Ashore.

There arrived, the voices soon grew more clamorous as the pipes and tobacco were more furiously smoked. They sat in a cloud; and very soon all hands were singing a chorus, the women were dancing, and the fiddler scraping. O'Leary was not addicted to drunkenness, but it was hard to refuse his messmates and shipmates the pleasure of drinking to the success of Lucy, who, having been duly informed that some more of her sex were cruising round O'Leary, took the liberty of presenting herself to the company, although she made many excuses for her appearance under such novel circumstances. Amongst the number of seamen present there was a very handsome boatswain's mate, who, as O'Leary began to get a little in the wind, commenced paying Lucy some compliments.

He had been struck, he said, all of a heap with her charms, and he could not withdraw his eyes from her. O'Leary, had he been sober, would have seen through all this in a moment; but being decidedly hazy, and very knowing, he expressed himself pleased at the compliments paid to the object of his choice. He was liberal in the extreme. Irishmen are generally liberal when they are sober, and drunkenness develops the virtue to its fullest extent. Lucy began to look at the drunken Irishman, who was no beauty at any time, and from him her eyes were turned to the boatswain's mate, who seemed not at all averse to the lady, and when O'Leary was handed off rather insensible, the two parties had a long whispered conversation, in which the words 'allotment' and 'marriage' were distinctly overheard.

Early the next day, all hands mustered in clean summer rigging to attend O'Leary to the church. He said he was a good Catholic, but that for Lucy he would turn Mahommedan, or Protestant, or Jumper—Shaker, Unitarian, Moravian, or Lutheran.

Never did any of his Majesty's seamen make a better display than on this ominous day. Their tails were tied with the nicest precision; the front curls were set to rights by their female friends; and all hands, decorated with ribbons, began to walk two and two to the church, each man having under his protection one of the softer sex. O'Leary would have taken his wife to church in the mail-coach, but unfortunately the driver was deaf to all persuasion. Once indeed he thought of the orangeman's wheelbarrow; but that was scouted by the bride. He then thought of a cart, but met with no better success; so he finished by observing that no one could deprive them of their legs, and that a walk to church was always more fitting and proper than driving up to the door, as if they were gentlemen going to dinner.

The handsome boatswain's mate led the way. Whenever there was a chance of any obstruction from the curiosity of the public, he gave a pipe, as if he was attending the side for a commissioned officer. They all wore white rosettes; the women had all new dresses, as gaudy as parti-coloured ribbons could make them; and their bonnets had as many streamers as a ship dressed in colours. A slight diversion was made in consequence of some boys amusing themselves by ridiculing the procession, upon which one of the fleet, as the leading boatswain's mate called the party, left his station, and, catching hold of one of the lads, who had exhibited some symptoms of a preparation to pelt the bride, whose now modest demeanour was very different from her general habits and manner, punched his head with

as much freedom as a cooper would perform the same operation upon a cask. The other boys immediately attacked him *en masse*, and Jack was obliged to make the signal for more assistance. No sailor ever yet hung out the flag of distress in vain. In a moment a general rush was made at the boys. Some dock-yard mates, who were a little after their time, joined in the affray, which soon assumed a serious aspect; and whilst the women availed themselves of every favourable opportunity to assist their men, they cried and howled like so many beaten spaniels. This offensive declaration on their part was speedily revenged by the boys, who, seeing it a regular fight between the men, availed themselves of this opportunity to relieve their protectors from the annoyances of the women by opening a most harassing fire of mud, every shot of which made a conspicuous mark when it took effect.

The bride, who always was most forward to relieve the boatswain's mate, had a most distressing blow inside her white bonnet, which half covered her face. This was seen by O'Leary, who shouted out, by the holy poker, the necessity of greater exertion. His example was followed; the mates were routed; and the light squadron alone continued offensive operations, by throwing dirt, until the distance, and one or two large stones dexterously thrown, made them relinquish their exertions. Still they hovered on the side of the procession; and when the party, dirty as they were, got into church, they sent far and near, resolved to take vengeance on the sailors, and leave them work enough to wash their faces and their clothes.

O'Leary, being asked by the clergyman if he was a Catholic or Protestant, answered, as the curate is said to have done when the bishop asked what suit was trumps, 'Whichever your lordship pleases.'

'But which *are* you?' repeated the clergyman.

'Plase yer honour, I can't exactly say,' replied O'Leary. 'My father was a Catholic, and was hung for that same; and, as I protested against it, I'm, no doubt, your worship's honour, a right good Protestant.'

The marriage was quite a farce. A sailor has as many wives as he has buttons on his jacket; and not unfrequently they were married when, if not drunk, they were half-seas over. O'Leary, when the ceremony was over, asked, 'Is she mine now, yer honour?'

'Indeed she is, and for your life.'

'Then I believe I had better make the best of my bargain;' and having arranged everything, and the bride having been kissed by all, the boatswain's mate's lips having been observed to move as if he spoke, the party began to form in order to return to the Tar Ashore, there to put a finish to the ceremony by a bowl of punch. No sooner, however, did they gain the open street, than a shout of defiance was heard from half a hundred tiny voices; and a shower of mud and stones followed the vocal salute.

O'Leary was married, and consequently desperate. He rushed into the thickest of the group, leaving his bride endeavouring to faint; the boatswain's mate flew to her rescue, whilst all the rest joined in the riot. It was a glorious sight—quite national. The little urchins retreated as they saw a more powerful force approaching; they one and all made a rush down a narrow street. The seamen incautiously followed. Here they were assaulted by another force; and, after a quarter of an hour's good hard work, they made the signal to rendezvous at the Tar Ashore. This they effected; the bowl of punch was called for; and when they sat down to do honour to O'Leary, the bride was nowhere to be found. A general search followed, but in vain. There was no doubt but that the girl, having got the allotment duly signed, had eloped almost at the church door, during the conflict, with O'Leary's particular friend the handsome boatswain's mate, such acts of disinterested kindness not being confined to the nobility or the gentry.

CHAPTER XXXI.

IN WHICH IT IS PROVED THAT ONE MAY SURVIVE THE LOSS OF A BEST FRIEND, AND FAINT IF HE HAPPENS TO BE ALIVE.

SUSAN'S last letter received at the Cape was a sufficient guide for any man with only half the energy of Bowling. He very soon found himself near the residence of Mrs. Talbot; and a few inquiries confirmed him that the beautiful residence within a few yards contained not only Mrs. Talbot, but his Susan. Years had passed away; the poor penniless boy had, by his own exertion, risen to an enviable rank in the finest profession in the world. Features, then scarcely formed, had become developed, and one of the handsomest men in the navy now stood gazing at the house, afraid to advance to meet a girl, although foremost in every danger which might end in death.

He was perfectly aware she never could remember in the sun-burnt captain, whose face was half covered with whiskers, the once pale, smooth-faced boy she taught to read; and undecided as to the course he intended to pursue, he leant over a gate, keeping his eye fixed upon the house, and doing what sailors very often do,—whistle for want of thought. He was a fish out of water, and just as lively.

It was a beautiful summer's morning, and not yet eight o'clock. Love is always active,

always early, and always excessively foolish. There was Bowling,—the active, enterprising Bowling,—gaping, like a clod-hopping boy, over a gate, as one sometimes sees an imprisoned horse. At last he was rewarded: a rather slim figure emerged from a drawing-room window, dressed in deep mourning, and shortly afterwards one evidently older, dressed in the sober colour which becomes age. Bowling's eye, which could make out a strange sail at the distance of twenty miles, was keen enough to discover the difference of the two; and certainly the fairy form of Susan would have captivated a less ardent mind than that of Bowling.

There are no men more bashful than sailors. Now, indeed, they have managed to pick up a little of that worldly commodity —impudence; but it takes a long time to brazen the face of a man who half his life has been wandering over the wide ocean, confined to a ship, and his only companions those of his own sex, to meet the modest eye of society. Bowling felt his heart beat as if it would dislodge his waistcoat buttons; he never had felt so very cold, foolish, or fearful as he did at that moment. He was resolved to approach her, and was turning in his mind how he could best effect it, when a countryman, touching his hat, accosted him with 'Fine morning, zur.'

Civility costs nothing, and often gains esteem, as the copy says; and Bowling, more from custom than civility, touched his hat in return, and acquiesced in the general remark whenever it does so happen that the sun shines in England.

'Can you tell me, my man,' said Bowling, 'who lives in yonder house?'

'My missus, zur.'

'Your mistress, eh?'

'Yes, zur; and as kind a missus as ever broke bread; and as for the other lady, she's an angel sent from heaven: bless her pretty face.'

'What's her name?' asked Bowling, who, like a true lover, was all impatience to hear her name pronounced after such praise.

'She's a Miss Susan Monckton, zur; she's in terrible grief, I hear say—terrible; her mother's dead, and there's some report that a young man is dead out in the Eastern Indies that she liked; but I don't believe anything about that, for I've lived in the family for the last fifteen years, and never saw but one man in the house besides the parson, and he married missus's daughter that died.'

'Well, what was his name?'

'Oh, that was a Master Cornish, a captain; he lives out in that house yonder. He's just come home from abroad, and,' said the countryman, trying to make his face assume a degree of cunning, 'that 'ere Captain Cornish does not go there every day to see his mother-in-law; but I must be going to breakfast, zur; my missus is a-waiting for me.'

'Here, my fine fellow,' said Bowling, 'here's a shilling for you to drink the young lady's health. Does she ever walk out?'

'Bless your heart, zur, in ten minutes she'll be at Widow Smith's, teaching the children; she's always there by nine o'clock.'

'Here's another shilling for you. The day will be hot, and a glass of beer or so rather delicious. Is it this way to Widow Smith's?'

'Yes, yer honour, the first cottage to the left. The park gate is just beyond it.'

Away went Bowling, resolved to blockade the port. He had only to station himself on a small rising ground, and he could then command a view which would embrace the road up which, to all appearances, she must come: nor had he to wait long in suspense. The elegant form of his Susan was seen slowly advancing; she wore no veil, and she kept her eyes to the ground, as if in serious thought. As she came through the gate, she perceived the stranger coming gently along the road; and as she had to pass him to gain Widow Smith's cottage, she availed herself of her vicinity to him to notice his features. Their eyes met, and as suddenly both became confused. Bowling could scarcely credit that the girl he had left a child could have budded and blossomed into so beautiful a creature; and a kind of instinct seemed to have pointed out the stranger as one she had seen before, and whose features were not altogether unpleasant to her.

She passed on, whilst Bowling turned round in breathless admiration. Why did he not fly to her, throw himself at her feet, declare his name, his well-earned rank, and in one moment repay himself for all his anxiety? These questions rose rapidly in the mind of the anxious sailor, but then it occurred to him that he might make a mistake; the lady might be another; his only information was gleaned from a countryman, and he, at least in his idea, had hinted the belief current in the neighbourhood that he was killed. He watched her anxiously until she arrived at Widow Smith's door, when she turned round and saw him standing on the same spot, his eyes fixed upon her.

Very little were the children instructed that morning; and as they gabbled on their parrot-like repetitions, the mind of Susan was fixed upon the stranger, and Widow Smith had to correct errors too glaring to be overlooked.

One girl was asked who was Moses? and she answered—'The gentleman who built the Ark;' whilst another made Abel kill Cain, and Adam turn the angel out of Paradise. The reading and spelling abounded in uncorrected mistakes, and even a chapter in the Bible failed to rivet her attention. The stranger occupied the teacher's thought; and a vague idea haunted her mind that she had seen him

before, and could somehow retrace his features. For a long hour Bowling remained hovering about the cottage, until hope itself grew sick. After piously devoting all the school to a place considerably beyond Jericho, he passed the cottage and returned to his inn, there to shape the course he intended to steer.

That he discredited Cornish's account of Susan was beyond a doubt; and yet there were some lingering misgivings.—Why did she write to him?—How came he so intimate with her? Brooding over these queries, he reached his inn, and, in spite of his love, managed a considerable breakfast, it being quite marvellous how much eating consoles love, and assuages grief.

At noon a tall, handsome man was seen galloping to the gate which led to Mrs. Talbot's house. He dismounted, and giving his horse to a boy, who appeared to be sent for the purpose, he sat upon a small stile which led into a field of corn, through which there was a path. Five minutes had scarcely elapsed before Susan left the cottage and met the handsome man at the stile, over which she was assisted. She then took his arm, and thus the conversation began:—

'Your own time is expired, Susan—the hour you fixed has passed, and I come to claim the hand you cannot in honour withhold;—what I have told you before I repeat now—my fortune, all my inheritance is yours. The money left you by Rosa shall be your own, independent of all control.'

'Pray, Captain Cornish, do not pursue a subject of this nature, basing it upon my poverty or my assumed mercenary nature. From the instant I knew that poor Rosa could not legally bequeath me the money she did, I desired Mrs. Talbot not to press the subject for one moment; it was for you to have acted, if you thought proper, in accordance with her wishes, not for me to have tried the validity of my claim.'

'For Heaven's sake, Susan, understand me for the future better than you have done for the past. It was my father who took the legal objection. I had, when I sailed for the Cape, made a will, which, after leaving everything to that poor departed angel of a wife, I left to my brother; had this money bequeathed to you illegally been paid, the executor, your friend the clergyman—my friend—everybody's friend, would have been obliged to restore it to my representatives. Hence the prudent foresight of my father, who wept like a child as he penned the letter, which, whilst it disappointed you, protected your friend.'

'It was no disappointment, Captain Cornish; I never possessed the money; consequently I never knew its value.'

'Have you any objection to make to the proposition I have so frequently made?'

'I gave my unwilling consent once more to listen to you to-day, and once more to hear your assertion relative to Captain Bowling. I confess his long absence almost makes me credit his death, against—ah, God only knows how much against—my inclination.'

'Credit it! who but Susan Monckton would discredit my word? Can you imagine I would win you by false reports if I did not esteem myself every way the superior to this man? Do you think so basely of me as to believe I would come forward and found my claim upon a falsehood? I—I—Miss Monckton, who never even dreamt a falsehood even in my sleep, and sleep is itself a falsehood.'—Here Captain Cornish turned his eyes up to the blue sky above, and with most ardent energy appealed to Heaven to witness this degradation of his character.

'Dead?' said Susan, evidently quite bewildered in her thoughts, 'dead! and who saw him dead?—who performed the last offices?—what friend closed his eyes?—and how—how did he die?'

'I have told you before that he was attacked, after the capture of Cape Town, with a violent fever. I mentioned to you how kindly he behaved to me, in return for my having saved his life and received a wound in the desperate assault. Have I not even mentioned, nay, sung you, the very song he sang?—have I not recapitulated his words relative to yourself?—and you have confirmed them as truth when you acknowledge you only saw him as a child. Is it anything particularly wonderful that a man dies of a fever? And if he is not dead, which is about as certain as the sun now shines, you have greater cause of complaint in his neglect. If I possessed Miss Monckton's beauty, my pride would rather prompt me to believe his death, rather than know I could be neglected. One with such charms—such matchless charms — such eyes — such unrivalled sweetness, how could I be neglected? No, no; your own sense in the conviction of your own power must overthrow such weak, such tottering hope, and confirm in the neglect you have received the certainty of his death.'

Susan began to falter under this shower of compliments, uttered with rapid articulation. And she remained silent, walking quickly with her eyes fixed on the ground, leaning on the man's arm she could not love; for he had told her of the death of the only man she ever loved.

'And yet I have no evidence of his death—none whatever. You never saw him when dead. You never witnessed his funeral.'

'Is it,' said Cornish, determined not to lose her for want of a little stretch of the imagination, 'the evidence of my own eyesight you require before you grant me the privilege of a lover, and seal our union with a kiss?'—Susan started. 'Nay, start not, there is no impropriety intended. I feared to tell you the whole truth until I had so far in-

gratiated myself as to dare to venture on the account. He died at the Cape; he was buried with funeral honours on shore; the whole garrison attended him to his grave; the fort fired minute-guns, and his ship the *Echo* did the same, until the corpse reached the shore. Badly wounded as I was—almost dead—hope quite relinquished by my medical attendants, when I received your sad letter, announcing poor Rosa's death—*I* did not attend him in his last earthly honours, but I saw the procession—I heard the guns, and I joined in the universal grief for one so brave and so respected.'

Susan burst into tears, and imploring Cornish not to urge her to any answer until to-morrow, was about to leave him.

'To-morrow?' said Cornish, 'that universal cheat to-morrow!—The captive dreams of ransom in to-morrow; the sailor sees his long-sought lighthouse in to-morrow; the pilgrim's journey finishes with to-morrow; and to the lover's fierce embrace, to-morrow gives visionary charms. I am too old to be fooled by such shadowy expectations, of which I may be robbed by death before—to-morrow. Now, Susan, now—what avails the delay of twenty-four hours? and in seeking this useless gratification, think to what torments you condemn me. Here is this field—the bright sun which seems to smile upon the proposition shall witness our mutual vows; and your friend, "to-morrow," shall only be referred to as the time of greater happiness to come. Nay, my dear Susan, why turn away from me?—do I merit this? After all my devotion, all my love, my hours of uncertainty and of uneasiness—is it thus you turn away from me and leave me to wretchedness and despair?'

Cornish was a great adept in the noble art of love-making; he knew that the great chance of success is in the volubility of words. A girl half overcome by love, and trembling with passion, is not a cool critic to dissect the sentences: the ear catches and retains words such as love, affection, sufferings, wretchedness, despair, and a dagger. And if the eyes are well managed, the breathing short, the articulation hurried, and the hands sufficiently clasped, hers in the man's, it must be either a woman of uncommon energy of mind, or one so despicably cold as to be not worth the trouble, who can withstand the appeal, especially in summer.

Susan would have fallen into the snare so artfully laid and so falsely sustained. Not that she would have hesitated one second between Bowling and Cornish but that she believed Bowling dead, in spite of all she had endeavoured to conjure up in her mind since she saw the stranger. Our guardian angels do sometimes keep awake, although, from our evil propensities and actions, one might be warranted in the supposition that they revelled in sleep and carelessness. At the moment Cornish had finished his impassioned strain, the portly figure of the good-natured rector was seen coming in the direction from his house to that of Mrs. Talbot's, and the lovers, if such they may be termed, were in the pathway. Cornish hastily said that he must await her orders until to-morrow, not being on speaking terms with the clergyman, who had expressed his feeling very freely upon the base act of withholding the money Rosa had left to Susan. The clergyman had gained the secret of Susan's love for her *protégé*, and argued much happiness from the union of two such people—both under adversities, and both surmounting the difficulties. Besides, he had seen the one in the last trying hour of friendship, and esteemed her character when he saw how nobly she relinquished the bequest the moment the legal difficulty was mooted.

Cornish's horse was soon heard clattering along the road; and Susan awaited at the stile the friendly salute of the clergyman.

'News, Susan, news!' the good man began, directly he thought his words would reach her, 'glorious news!—How your dear little heart will jump when you read it! I have a great mind to keep you in suspense, you little fairy! Come, guess what it is.'

'Why, Nelson has gained some other victory, or St. Vincent has added another laurel, or——'

'You are very wide of the mark indeed. Neither Nelson, Collingwood, nor St. Vincent, are concerned. Now does not your little heart palpitate? Is there no one in the navy whose honour is dear to you?—whose promotion would be like a blessing upon you?'

'None,' said Susan, bursting into tears; 'none now. The time is past since I could join in your feelings and exult with you.'

'Why, what's in the wind now?' exclaimed the excellent man; 'that's a sailor's term, Susan; and why these tears, my little treasure? It's only a lovers' quarrel, I suppose. He has not written, eh? Cruel fellow! And you won't forgive him, will you, Susan?—Never! never!' Here he patted her little hand, and finding her tears still increase, he suddenly demanded, more than asked, the reason.

'From you,' said Susan, 'I should have learnt to bear up against all misfortunes without repining; and I have seen enough in my short life to know that all is vanity. The man to whom you refer is dead.'—And here she leant over the stile and wept so bitterly, that had any stranger passed, the clergyman might have been in an awkward situation.

'I refer,' said the clergyman, 'to Captain Bowling.'

'He is dead!' sobbed poor Susan.

'Heaven forbid it! surely you are mistaken? When did it occur?'

'At the Cape of Good Hope,' replied Susan, 'four months since.'

'Four months, child! why, you rave—you are distracted! He anchored in Portsmouth not four days ago—is made a post-captain, and has brought in a French frigate as large as Noah's ark!'

Susan raised her head, and clasped her hands together as she elevated her eyes to the clergyman.

'Here, girl, read this *Gazette;* here it is in print—they never tell lies in print. Come, come, lean on me; let me get you to the house before you faint, if you think that requisite. Now don't be foolish, girl; you did not faint when you thought he was dead, and now that he's alive—here—help at the cottage!—bring some water! Poor little darling, bad news she had Christian fortitude to bear up against; but the tide of joy is too strong for the strongest of us.'

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN HOW OFTEN PEOPLE TALK ON SUBJECTS THEY NEITHER OF THEM UNDERSTAND.

SUSAN read over the despatch about a dozen times, and the good-natured clergyman dwelt much upon the character of the man who could, from nothing, thus gain the highest honours. He delivered a long discourse to Susan, not one word of which she heard, upon youthful emulation, Christian fortitude, gratitude, and obedience; and just whilst her spirits were highest—her hope the most buoyant—she received the following note, which rather disturbed the equilibrium of her temper.

'I dare not begin my letter as I ever have begun, for fear of offending you; and I dread to begin less coldly, fearing you might imagine my affections changed. I have seen you—watched you; and whatever I might have pictured to myself as the perfection of female beauty and elegance is outrivalled by your face and form. Why I did not rush and clasp you to my arms, you, I suppose, can guess as well as I can write. I will be candid with you, for I scorn duplicity. At the Cape I met with a Captain Cornish; this man ruined your reputation by his assertions. I discredited his reports, as I ever should do the words which left you destitute of honour and of virtue. He is bound to produce me the letter you wrote him at the Cape, in which he asserts you wrote for money, and claimed his protection. I am still the same I ever was: the same star which guided me over the Atlantic now rests over Mrs. Talbot's house. I ask no other proof of your innocence than your own word; and I want no other assurance but this, "that you are still an inmate of her house." I have leave for a fortnight. Three days of that short limit are expired; but I have seen you, and so far I am rewarded. You have only to direct one line to the Eagle, and you will find me at your feet in the smallest space of time the distance was ever traversed.

'T. BOWLING.'

The colour came and fled as Susan read this strange letter. It appeared altogether unintelligible, the accusation resting against the very man who that morning had pressed her to accept his offer of marriage. But the lie of Bowling's death was evident—it required no conjurer to unriddle that; and between the excitement of the letter—the certainty of the handsome stranger being the man to whom she had united herself in a promise of marriage—the accusation—the treachery—she took the usual method adopted by all ladies, and, giving something between a scream and a shriek, burst into tears. The clergyman immediately settled that it was a letter announcing Bowling's death: that reverend gentleman was always hasty at conclusions, and, like men who jump at conclusions, he was occasionally in error.

When Susan could be recovered sufficiently to answer questions, the reverend gentleman, having slightly expatiated upon Christian fortitude, begged to know the contents of the letter; and Susan, without the slightest hesitation, placed it in his hands. The very act was that of innocence. Whilst Susan sat wringing her hand in despair, and suffering under wounded pride, the clergyman had left the room, and was seen taking a short path across the fields leading to the village in which Bowling resided. His stick was seen flourishing about as if it were a semiphor, and, in spite of his figure and his age, he was going along with all the lightness and elasticity of youth.

Although the rector preached unceasingly about the necessity of governing well one's temper and one's passion, he was decidedly, in this instance, the sign-post which pointed the way, but did not follow it. Susan was a pet of his. Her excellence of character he had long observed; and if ever an innocent flower bloomed in seclusion, Susan was that flower. Independently of the knowledge of this, the clergyman, who was the executor of Mrs. Cornish's will, had formed an idea not very flattering to the character of Captain Cornish. This last affair made him desperate; and as he was allowing his temper to get the better of him he came in contact with Cornish, who was pursuing his way to Mrs. Talbot's, to waste a few hours in endeavouring to gain the affections—he cared very little

about the hand—of the girl he had so shamefully traduced.

'Good-morning, sir,' said Cornish.

The clergyman looked up: the words had broken his chain of thoughts, and the very man that he had excommunicated in his mind stood before him with his hand extended. Instinctively the hands of the clergyman went behind him; and for fear they should get adrift, they clasped each other with such firmness that the stick was rather painful in its present position.

'Sir!' answered the clergyman.

'I wished you good-morning, sir, and I offered you my hand.'

'I wish you a very good-morning, sir,' replied the clergyman, bowing, 'and I beg to withhold my hand.' As he said this, he walked on.

Cornish, not at all inclined to allow any one to treat him thus, turned back, and, walking close to the clergyman's side, said, 'I must expect, sir, some explanation of this conduct; not in a hostile mood, but in order that I may explain away any reports prejudicial to my character.'

'Can you explain away, sir, all the reports you have spread prejudicial to the character of others? Has female virtue never suffered from your calumny? Has the innocent never been blighted in reputation? Has that person, to whom you are most bound by the last wish of your dying wife — has her character, sir, been respected by you? Or have you basely, cowardly, falsely decried her?'

'Your profession, sir,' said Cornish, 'protects and licenses your tongue. You are a privileged brawler, whom none can answer; or, sir—but it would well merit the name of coward if I said what I intended, when I cannot chastise you.'

The blood, that had mounted high in the clergyman, suddenly returned to its proper temperature. He was aware he had committed himself, and received the rebuke with resignation. 'I have, sir, no words to spare. Your conscience is your best judge; and I must interpose my authority as a magistrate and a clergyman to stop the meeting which I know to be near at hand. I am going to do you a service, sir; and if I could do you a greater, I would recommend you to alter the direction of your walk.'

'And I would recommend you to mind your own business—to interfere only where your profession imperatively demands it; and to preach "peace and good-will to all men," not to breed up discord and dissensions where you might produce harmony and good-will.' As Captain Cornish said this, he turned haughtily round and continued his route.

'I'm almost wicked enough to regret,' said the honest-hearted rector, 'having taken holy orders; and I believe my feelings at this moment are instigated by the devil, or I could better control them.'

'He may take his change out of that,' muttered Cornish to himself, 'and thank himself he wore a black coat, or I would have led him by the nose to the next stile, and kicked him over it — an impudent, intermeddling hypocrite!'

Having let out this sentence, he began to think what could be brewing. He had not read the *Gazette*, and was quite ignorant of Bowling's arrival. Indeed, from the time the *Harrier* had anchored, Cornish began to infer that Bowling might accidentally have paid a visit to Verdun, or taken a cold, moist grave in the sea, either of which would have suited his purpose. Cornish's character was a mixture, like punch, hot and cold, strong and weak, sweet and sour; and to this character was added that of personal courage —a kind of brute virtue possessed by all but the sick. Vigorous health is generally followed by courage; ill health produces nervous irritability, and excites fear of the most trivial objects.

'I'll have her at any price!' said he to himself, as he pursued his course to Mrs. Talbot's; 'and as for the parson, I care no more for him than a dog does for his grandfather. Bowling's death, or my report of it, will soon wear away, and Susan will become mine in the anticipation of independence. A poor, simple girl—a child of adversity and dependence—money is the lure!—money is the sure bait, at which we all more or less nibble, and which is the object of all. Love is a mighty fine word, but I will back money against all love.' And as the worthy Captain Cornish commented thus upon the adverse powers, and gave the weight in the scale to his purse, he arrived at the shrubbery which led to the house.

'Pray is there one Captain Bowling in your house?' said the rector, as he encountered Boniface standing at his door, with a yard of clay in his mouth, puffing out large volumes of the vilest-scented tobacco.

'Yes, there he is,' said the innkeeper; 'and the sooner he is out of it the better. He keeps going round and round the room, like a squirrel in a cage, a kind of home circuit, as the lawyers say; and if you go into the tap-room your reverence may hear him pacing about, like a soldier on a cold day.'

'Have the kindness to mention to him that I wish to see him.'

'I'll do it myself, your reverence, for I don't think I should get many volunteers in that cause. He's a regular quick one, and answers before any question is put to him. The maid went up, thinking he had rung his bell an hour ago; and when she began, "Did you—," "No," says he, "I did not!" and out came the poor girl, half demented. But an old soldier, your reverence, who has served in Holland, cares very little for words,

without they are said by an officer on parade. This way, sir; this is the room.'

'Just say I wish to speak to him.'

'No doubt he'll guess that himself, sir,' said Boniface, turning the handle and calling out, 'His reverence the rector.'

Bowling halted in his quick pace, and drew up, not a little astonished at such a visitation of the clergy.

Now, the good-natured rector had started, determined to do the best action in the world, and long before he could bring his mind into order, in regard to the course he should pursue, he had run against Cornish, and had allowed one or two very unchristian-like, but very natural, ideas to get possession of his head. The irritation had not decreased altogether with the absence of the cause; nor had Boniface's attempted sketch of a campaign, which finished, not unlike the manifestation of fire in his pipe, in smoke, and the hasty introduction, afforded him a moment's consideration. Boniface shut the door with as much zeal and discretion as if the room contained a couple of wild tigers, and the rector commenced the interview with a low bow.

Bowling, who had ever manifested the highest respect for the servants of the church, returned the salute with much gravity, and then waited, with a kind of respectful silence, for the rector to begin, keeping his eyes fixed upon him in that peculiar gaze which denotes attention. The rector bowed again, and Bowling did the same, thinking that if the rector performed the ko-too and knocked his head a dozen times against the mantelpiece, he was bound to do the same; and in his anxiety to show his respect he quite forgot the law of society which prompts anyone receiving a visit to offer a seat to the visitor.

'Humph!' said the rector. 'Pray do you take snuff?'

'Many thanks,' said Bowling; 'I have none of the minor vices.'

'Nor any of the major ones, if reports are true.'

Bowling bowed again, and began to think the compliment was merely the prelude to a supplication for charity. But the snuff-box had done what nothing else could do; it had broken down the first barrier of English reserve; it had overleapt that everlasting prelude to a conversation—such as 'A fine day to-day, sir!'—'Cold weather, sir!'—'Probability of rain, sir!' and such-like sentences, all of which are the mere preface to the work, and which the man to whom they are addressed knows just as well as he who makes the national remark.

'I come,' said the rector, 'to clear some doubts which I understand to have existed in your mind upon a subject of great importance to your worldly happiness.'

'I fear you have been mistaken in the person,' replied Bowling, with a smile of considerable affability. 'Although, if I were the man, I should esteem this concern for my welfare now and hereafter as a favour which would place me under a considerable obligation.'

'If,' continued the rector, 'I can, from my intimacy with the subject, relieve your mind from any apprehension, it is a duty I owe to my profession, and my conscience.'

'I feel very grateful,' said Bowling, 'for this kind attention on your part. Sailors, you are aware, have few opportunities of narrowly investigating the subject; and when far away on foreign stations, with their minds occupied by professional duties, are liable to entertain suspicions and doubts, which their constant intercourse with the world, and beholding human nature under every circumstance of superstition, ignorance and falsehood, might engender.'

'Very true, sir,' replied the rector. 'Suspicions are engendered by falsehood; but the sun of truth instantly dispels the clouds of doubts and uncertainties. I have no doubt but that a conversation, if such you could spare me, would relieve your mind from great anxiety, and restore you to a happiness and contentment to which, under similar circumstances, you must be a stranger.'

'I shall most gratefully avail myself of any instruction from you, sir. In my early life I was indebted to a gentleman of your honourable calling to my rescue from degradation; to him I owe my happiness, and my advancement. He first inculcated the knowledge of sacred truth; and I trust I shall ever be sensible of the benefits which have been bestowed upon me. I should esteem it an honour, if you would allow me to receive this visit as one which might lead to a further intimacy; and whilst I again thank you for this marked act of attention to my interest, I venture to express a hope that I might be allowed to return it.'

'If you will dine with me to-day at six I shall be happy to take that as a return of my visit.'

Bowling accepted the kind invitation; and the clergyman, quite pleased with his success, told the gallant captain that Boniface would direct him to the parsonage, shook hands with his new acquaintance, and withdrew. He then went down and informed the innkeeper that the Captain Bowling was the one who had fought the desperate action, as mentioned in last night's *Gazette*, and that he was a man likely to do as great deeds as Nelson, Collingwood, or Jervis.

This piece of information was not lost upon mine host of the Eagle; and before an hour had passed, Bowling had perceived about a hundred heads endeavouring to look into his window, curiosity—gaping, prying, childish curiosity—being one distinguish-

able mark of an Englishman in a country village.

'Well!' thought Bowling, 'of all the unexpected visits, this one of the rector of the parish, to take my soul into dock, and overhaul the timbers of my salvation, is the most kind and most extraordinary. He must imagine me connected with Obi, or that my craft has got sadly out of the right course, and been steering very wildly; but, little as I am in the mood for any confession, I will go and pay him all the respect his profession deserves.'

Captain Cornish had waited one hour in the room with Mrs. Talbot, but no Susan appeared; and as the rector was seen approaching, he took his hat and returned home by the road, having accepted an invitation to dinner, for Mrs. Talbot had observed his attentions to Susan, and thought her week's son-in-law could not do better, since he would not pay her the money which the daughter left, than share it with her *protégée*.

The rector walked into the house, like a privileged person. He was in high spirits, and desired the servant to tell Miss Monckton he was anxious to see her. She came down instantly; she had been crying, laughing, fainting, and indulging in every extreme of female felicity.

'I've seen him,' said the good-natured clergyman; 'and a finer, handsomer fellow never walked a deck.'

'Oh, spare your description. What did he say of *me*?—Did he at once discredit this base assertion? Did he spurn the unworthy idea, like a man? Speak!—speak!—tell me all he said, and all he did.'

'Bless me, my dear girl, what a hurry you are in. Of course I did not tell him anything concerning you; I merely hinted that I could relieve all his doubts and difficulties; and, having gained his confidence, asked him to dinner.'

'And he dines with you?'

'Certainly; and afterwards I shall talk over the affair.'

'Afterwards! Can I wait three hours more under such dreadful circumstances? I have written him this note; and I will send it directly.' She rang the bell, and ordered the servant to ride to the Eagle, and wait for an answer. 'Now,' she said, turning to the rector, 'I feel happy; and, if I am not mistaken, you will have to come here to dinner to find your company.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN WHICH THERE IS A PLEASANT AND AN UNPLEASANT RENCONTRE.

'SHE dare not answer it,' said Bowling in despair, as he looked from the window of the Eagle, quite unconscious that he was the object of public curiosity. He was of as much value to the innkeeper as a coroner's inquest. In a country village heroes are very rare, and deeds insignificant in themselves are soon magnified into wonderful exploits, trivial offences are made enormous crimes, and the slightest event becomes a nine-days' wonder. Happy people! who thus can increase pleasure as they increase their curiosity, and who can derive amusement from events so insignificant as to be lost in the bustle of a crowded town.

'Two hours gone,' continued Bowling, looking at his watch; 'two hours, and no answer—no notice taken of my letter. Cornish may have spoken the truth, and I have risked my life doubly; first by shot, and afterwards by sickness, for one so little worthy of such a venture. And yet it cannot be!—she had the seeds of virtue so early planted in her, and they grew so strong and vigorous, they could not so completely have been destroyed as this horrid silence of hers would intimate. Oh, how I wish I was far, far at sea, in my frigate!'

'A letter for you,' said Boniface; 'and Mrs. Talbot's servant is below, waiting for an answer.'

Bowling's hands trembled as he took the letter;—he who could plunge into a river, in which the alligators were as plentiful as the rubbish which floated on its surface, to save a fellow-creature—he who could swim with his sword in his mouth, in spite of the storm of shot which fell like hail around him—he who could run a cockle-shell of a brig under the stern of a large frigate, to cripple her—trembled, like a man with the ague, as he took the letter. He was aware of the weakness, and would have concealed himself from observation; but Boniface was curious—innkeepers, ladies' maids, lacqueys de place, are always so.

'I will read this letter,' said Bowling, 'and I will ring when the answer is ready.'

'No occasion, sir, to give yourself so much trouble: I can wait.'

'The devil you can,' replied the captain; 'then I cannot. So, as one of the two must remain, and the house is yours, I will avail myself of the open air.' He took his hat, and, passing the servant, struck into the road which led to Mrs. Talbot's, and commenced reading the letter.

'If,' the letter began, 'you can believe me the wretch you have dared to describe—if one word of this tale, purported to have been told by Captain Cornish, is true—I am as unworthy of your notice as I almost hold you to be of mine from the suspicion. I am living under the protection of Mrs. Talbot, who is at present ignorant of your arrival, although well aware of our former friendship and correspondence. She would not shelter the mistress of her *son-in-law*, nor dare you even

suspect her capable of such baseness. I have written this, not in exculpation of myself—that would be beneath the daughter of the man at whose death-bed you saw me kneel; —I have written it to shame your suspicion; and I await either you, or your answer—as ready to forgive your weakness, as to prove my own innocence.

'SUSAN MONCKTON.'

'Now, by Heaven!' exclaimed Bowling, 'I will cram the cursed lie down Cornish's throat. Ah! I remember he lives near here!' He stopped, considered, then looked, as if to measure the distance between the village and Mrs. Talbot's; when suddenly making up his mind to the course he intended to pursue, he returned to the inn. 'There is no answer to the letter,' he said to Mrs. Talbot's servant; 'I will answer it myself. Bring me some paper.'

There was a bustle as to who should serve the handsome captain; but Boniface's daughter, a pretty girl, was the quickest.

'Thank you, my dear; but you have forgotten the pen and the ink. Your eyes are bright and sparkling enough to convey any message, but mine are not so eloquent.'

'The nicest man in all England!' said the girl, as she ran down for the pen and ink she had purposely omitted to bring. 'I hope he'll speak to me again—here's the pen and ink, sir.'

'Thank you, my pretty little lady.' The pretty little lady smiled. 'Can you tell me at what hour the post goes from here to Portsmouth?'

'In half an hour, sir.'

'Stop, child, don't be in such a hurry,' said Bowling, as he began writing. 'Can you tell me, also, my charming little Venus—(why, I should think you the prettiest girl in the village,' said Bowling, looking up)—'whereabouts the ruin of all your sex lives—one Captain Cornish?'

There was a blush suffused the girl's face; and had Bowling discontinued writing, his fair attendant might have betrayed a secret.

'He lives in that large house, sir, in those trees, so nicely sheltered.'

'It ought to be a thick shelter to conceal such a lurking scoundrel.' The girl started. 'What's the name of his den—of his place of concealment?' Bowling looked up, and the pale face of the girl struck him with astonishment.

'It is called, sir,' said the girl, faltering, 'Woodside Hall.'

'Woodside Hall, is it? Now, child, get me a light and some sealing-wax, and tell me how far is the post-office?'

'Next door, sir,' replied the girl, watching him with intense interest. 'Shall I put the letter in?'

'No, I thank you, child; I always do my own work myself, and then I'm sure it's done, at any rate, so well that I have no one else to find fault with. Besides, this is as well kept a secret.'

'Dear me, sir!' said the girl, blushing, 'I hope you do not think I would open and read it!'

'No, my dear, I do not, but others might not be so discreet. There, don't be angry; if you pout, you will spoil your lips, and then Captain Cornish would not admire you.'

As he said this, he darted out of the room; then, suddenly returning, he said, 'Tell me, my rural Venus, was this Captain Cornish, who ruins half the county, ever married?'

'Oh yes,' replied the girl; 'he married Mrs. Talbot's daughter, and is now, we all think, going to marry that Miss Susan Monckton.'

'Is she pretty?' inquired Bowling, from a feeling of curiosity to know what others thought of her appearance.

'She is called pretty, sir,' answered the girl; 'but I do not see anything so very particular in her face.'

'I'll be bound to say Cornish has told you that you were far more beautiful.'

'Oh, sir, he does pay very great compliments.'

'Some day or other the epitaph-maker will pay him a compliment,' muttered the captain. As he left the inn, he put the letter in the post, and then, like a man having determined to do something desperate, walked with a quick pace towards Mrs. Talbot's.

The distance was not more than a mile. The servant, who rode, had long since returned with the short, pithy sentence, 'No answer,' and Susan was in positive despair. It was, too, her usual time to attend, on this day, her evening school; and, resolving not to show any distress of mind, she exerted herself to master her feelings.

'No answer!' she murmured; 'the proud man looks down upon his former companion. Perhaps he thinks the poor daughter of the rector of St. Giles's, the companion, the governess, is no longer worthy of her former scholar.' Susan was much too generous, even in her grief, to recall to her mind who he was. She put on her straw bonnet, threw a shawl carelessly over her shoulder, and walked towards the cottage where her pupils assembled. As she shut the gate, she saw Bowling descending a hill. He was coming along with quick strides; his head down; and every motion betokening hurry and impatience. She felt a chilling heaviness of heart, a suffocating sickness, such as timid men experience when they rise to speak in company for the first time. She had a difficult part to perform—that of an acknowledged admirer of one she had never seen for years, and never known but as a boy, under the influence of a love that had grown with her growth, and strengthened with her age. She could not but admire the man who

had exhibited towards her so many noble qualities; who had forced himself through all the difficulties of life, to a position which is the safe landing to the highest honours of his profession. 'How would he meet her?' flashed across her mind; for he had not deigned to answer her letter. Suddenly she thought her appearance at the gate might be indelicate; and as she half resolved to re-enter the house, she saw Bowling was running towards her. She trembled as she leaned against the gate; her head seemed turning with giddiness; and before she could master herself, the gallant sailor had seized her hand, and, caring little for all the world or its usages, snatched the first kiss ever imprinted by man upon her rosy lips. Nothing can be more delightful than the conviction expressed in the song—

'To know that I sighed upon innocent lips,
Which had never been sighed on by any but mine;

and if there is one drop of sweetness in the cup, almost overflowing with bitterness, which each man has presented to him at his birth, and which is rarely thoroughly drained even at the last moment of existence, it is when two hearts beat in unison, and the breath is thus deliciously mingled in thorough confidence and true affection. Bowling clasped her hands in his; he looked at her without speaking, and trembled with emotion;—his first distinct articulation was, 'God bless you, dearest Susan!' The barrier was broken down; the first words were scarcely uttered ere a torrent followed, and the pressure of the hand was firmly responded to.

'Time,' said Bowling, who was first master of himself, 'has perfected the beautiful work that I beheld only in an immature state in my infancy, leaving me every feature of my former benefactress, though infinitely more lovely and lovable; and in that gentle smile I see the heart is soft and kind as ever.'

Susan could not speak, but in a continued pressure of the hand she held acknowledged her gratitude. 'Come, dearest!' exclaimed her lover fondly, 'I must hear from those dear rosy lips forgiveness of my treasonable thoughts. I must catch each thrilling sound in that long sighed for confession that my love is warmly received, and that this dear hand and that beating heart are to be mine for ever.'

'It was but this morning I heard of your death; and now the certainty of the falsehood and your sudden appearance have so confused me, that I scarcely know what I say or what I do.'

'And yet you must endeavour to recover yourself, my dear Susan, to allow me to make the most of my short leave of absence, which may be cut much shorter from circumstances. In ten days' time I must be at Portsmouth —perhaps ordered to some distant country. We have much to arrange, and much of importance to discuss; and first of all——'

'Stop,' said Susan; 'I feel I can now speak without suffocation. The first thing to be done is for you to be introduced to Mrs. Talbot, to whom, above all others, I am so deeply indebted. She is aware of our correspondence, and I should ill discharge the respect I owe to her, if I did not instantly present you; so my school must excuse me this afternoon.'

Bowling opened the gate, and, taking her hand, led her towards the house. He again urged upon her the necessity of her forgiveness, in his having for one second believed the report of Cornish. In the conversation about him that ensued, he was much astonished at the light reception he had given to the news of his wife's death, but never mentioned his name with any rancour. All ill-feeling seemed obliterated from his mind in the presence of his Susan; and he approached the house, pleased to find she had been the inmate of a habitation of such pretensions. He was placed in a small room whilst Susan prepared Mrs. Talbot for his reception, who received him with all the kindness of a parent; and question after question followed from the curious lips of Susan. Mrs. Talbot was charmed with the sailor. There was a manly frankness about him which seemed to scorn deception. He answered every question without hesitation, but modestly forgetting, in all accounts of his exploits, to name himself as the principal actor. Some few minutes elapsed, when Mrs. Talbot left the room, and the lovers were again together. How rapidly time flies when love is the theme, and happiness is at hand! But oh! how it lingers, in pain and misery!

'Why, as I live!' said Bowling, 'it is more than five o'clock, and I have to dine with the rector.'

'You will dine nowhere but here, my gallant captain. I will not cede my right to you. This is my kingdom; here I command.'

'But that good man, dear Susan, is anxious for my everlasting happiness, and I made a promise to avail myself of his kind invitation, which I cannot evade.'

'That is easily managed,' she replied. Susan left the room, and returned in an instant; a servant was despatched for the rector, to dine at Mrs. Talbot's. Great was the laughter when the explanation about the rector's visit was given. Bowling believed it to have arisen from a zeal in his holy office, by which his eternal happiness was to be ensured.

'I must return to dress, Susan; I cannot present myself thus to Mrs. Talbot. It will not take me half an hour to go and return; we sailors are quick at shifting sails.'

'Can you ride, Thomas?'

'I can ride a spanker-boom, or get on the horse-rope, as well as any man; but to ride a horse I believe I should show myself a thorough seaman, and all my hope would be in holding on by the *mane*!'

Susan laughed, and despatched him. She had no idea that Cornish was to dine there, or perhaps she would have relinquished her own pleasure rather than place her lover in so awkward a position; but to her horror she saw the tall figure of Cornish coming up the private walk, and at once perceived the painful dilemma in which both parties would be placed. She had refrained from speaking to Bowling on the subject of his reported death, and still more on the open, unqualified admission of Cornish's love. She trusted, however, to the good-natured rector to keep down the effervescence of any ebullitions of temper the young men might be disposed to betray.

Cornish, as a privileged person, walked in without much ceremony. He had been busily employed in assuaging the griefs of some parishioners; he had visited the sick and the afflicted, and relieved the widow and the orphan. He was in a particularly benevolent mood, and much inclined to meet with some reward from Susan, for whose particular ear this string of falsehoods was intended, although he directed the words to Mrs. Talbot.

Of all the quiet, domestic creatures, unsuspicious of all intrigue, and almost unsophisticated in manners, Mrs. Talbot was perhaps one of the most so in England. She had secluded herself from the world, and had turned a deaf ear to the scandal industriously circulated in the village near which she lived. Occasionally an intruding servant would endeavour to make her unhappy, by repeating conversations said to have been overheard, the purport of which detracted from the character of Cornish. She believed him an upright man, who had partially sacrificed himself to gratify the dying wish of her daughter; and she exonerated him from any feeling of dishonesty in withholding the sum left by Rosa to Susan. As the deed was illegal (and no one could conscientiously sanction that which was not according to law), she was satisfied with every word he uttered, and, as Cornish was destined to inherit her wealth, regarded him in the light of a son rather than a nephew. Her attachment to Susan had increased since her daughter's death; for that amiable girl had contributed much to wean Mrs. Talbot from the melancholy which first assailed her, and she saw in the former companion of her daughter an exemplary person, devoted to herself, contented in her situation, and respected by all around her.

It was past six o'clock, and the punctuality of the house was necessarily a little overthrown. The clergyman, whose residence was near at hand, had arrived; and Susan had endeavoured to withdraw him to the window, in order to make him comprehend the difficult part he had to play, when the door opened, and Captain Bowling was announced. Bowling, who was well aware of the usages of society, walked first to Mrs. Talbot, who welcomed him kindly, and extended her hand to him. He then turned to Susan, and with more familiarity accosted her.

The clergyman was the next to whom he apologised for his apparent rudeness, but whose kind face indicated an overflowing of happiness. Then he turned to the stranger and in an instant he drew himself up to the strictest etiquette of English society, and bowed stiffly and formally.

'Captain Bowling,' said Mrs. Talbot, 'allow me to introduce you to Captain Cornish.' The bow was repeated on both sides, but neither had the extreme duplicity to say, 'Happy to resume our acquaintance.'

Bowling easily mastered his first surprise. He had been accustomed, half his life, to surprises; and the first brush being over, he was calm and collected. Not so Cornish: he felt evidently confused. He saw his hopes blighted in a moment; the morning's falsehood was completely contradicted; and he of whom he had often spoken so slightingly stood before him, his apparently very dangerous rival. During the schooling, then in operation, of each other's mind, so as to conduct their behaviour with decorum, the dinner was announced. Bowling, as a matter of right, took Susan; the clergyman laid claim to the widow, in right of his age and profession; and Captain Cornish brought up the rear, thinking within himself that he was in for about as pleasant a party as he ever remembered to have faced in his life. But he resolved to see it out, not at all disposed to cultivate any friendly feeling towards Bowling, whom he most ardently hated, and resolved to dethrone from his present enviable situation.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IN WHICH THERE IS AN OPINION UPON EATING AND DRINKING; AN ACCOUNT OF LIFE AND DEATH; A LOVE-SCENE; AND A SONG; WITH SOME ADVICE AS TO THE BEST HOURS OF MAKING LOVE.

A DINNER in a country house, without there are plenty of people who are acquainted with each other, is generally the dullest thing in the world. Such an entertainment is a sufficient punishment for four years of continual sinning, and in Catholic countries ought to be regarded as a penance of sufficient power to remove a whole peck of

purgatorial punishments. Oh, that everlasting conversation upon turnips and mangel wurzel—the animated discussion upon the last new system of draining—or the scientific display, upon a method equally novel, of cutting and grafting! Fortunately, Bowling was relieved from such irksome and unprofitable discourse; neither was he burthened with political discussions. He was called forward to relate the wonders of the deep; and, like a second Othello, to win the fair maid by a modest recital of the dangers and difficulties he had faced and overcome. Never was Cornish before at such a discount. His brilliant display of the tremendous courage exemplified at the taking of the Cape was sadly diminished by the plain, straightforward account of Bowling; and the clergyman, quite in raptures with his manly character, urged him to the recital of the capture of the frigate. This was told with that becoming liberality towards every one who had in any way assisted in his success, which a generous mind is sure to display. Indeed, to such an extent was this feeling carried in the present instance, that when the tale was told, an uninformed listener would have believed that Bowling, instead of being the leader, the planner, and the executor of this glorious achievement, was merely a participator in the action.

'Why, Cornish,' said the good-natured rector, 'I have never seen you so silent before. Come, join Captain Bowling and myself in a glass of wine.'

There was no refusing. Bowling filled his glass; he bowed elegantly to Cornish, and then to the rector; and with some degree of absurdity, which on other occasions would have passed off unremarked, he first put his lips to the glass without touching the wine, and then drained every drop. Cornish, whose character naturally made him suspicious, watched him narrowly, and gave to this act an interpretation of a hostile character.

Bowling, willing to turn the conversation from himself, made some inquiries relative to the neighbourhood; and the rector, willing to let Cornish exhibit before the stranger, endeavoured to call him into the field. But Cornish merely answered generally, or in reference to some particular family: he always addressed himself to Mrs. Talbot or the rector.

Bowling found time to express many civil things to Susan, whose appetite was entirely gone, and who apprehended some outbreak on the part of Cornish, whose handsome face was twisted into that Satanic countenance which mortified pride and revenge ever assume.

The dinner party was got through somehow. Occasionally there was a dead silence; then came an attempt to rally conversation, which died away with the words which attempted it; and when the ladies withdrew, and Mrs. Talbot desired Cornish to do the honours of her house, Susan looked at Bowling with an eye full of the imploring hope that he would be discreet. He needed not the hint; he was naturally cautious and reserved, and was now doubly so, being in an enemy's country, although not exactly in the enemy's camp.

The rector proposed the health of the ladies; and after expatiating upon the kindness of Mrs. Talbot, spoke of her as a kind mother.

'Surely,' said Bowling to the rector, 'Mrs. Talbot has no children!' At this moment Bowling's mind was distracted from the information the countryman had given him in the morning.

'None at present; but you must be aware that Captain Cornish's wife was a Miss Talbot. She was a suffering saint; and had she outlived the cruel disease that overcame her, he would have had, as his partner through life, the best companion and truest friend man ever had.'

Bowling, with all the manly feeling of his nature, forgot his animosity in the grief he might have occasioned, and for the first time actually addressed him. 'I regret, sir,' he began, 'that my foolish curiosity should have occasioned you the slightest uneasiness; and I trust you will forgive me for having unintentionally intruded a subject, for which my ignorance must be held responsible.' Cornish bowed, but the rector saved him the trouble of reply.

'The common fate of us all, sir,' he observed; 'and although no man can sufficiently master his feelings to repress them entirely, he best shows his confidence in his God who bows, and we must bow, with submission to the blow. Our earthly trials past, the hope of a better hereafter prevails; and those who have marked with attention each passing day of existence know how very little there is to regret in leaving this life.'

'And yet, sir,' said Bowling, 'we have all hopes which we wish to attain.'

'It is true; and these very hopes form the whole of our happiness. No sooner is one hope gained than another starts up. When you struggled as a foremast man, saw the midshipman's coat and the quarter-deck as a point hardly within the range of probability, the want of midshipmen, so seriously felt in those times, facilitated your advance. Directly it was gained, the white edging of the lieutenant's uniform, I doubt not, was ever before your eyes; and when that came, a vision of an epaulette on the left shoulder dazzled your attention. That once placed, the right shoulder was looked to. Your own gallantry and perseverance have surmounted this last difficulty; and now, what is your hope? That each man above you on the list may either die, be

killed, or promoted, and that you may live to hear yourself called "Admiral Bowling."

'What then follows, when old age whitens the head, when the film of infirmity clouds the eye, and all the evils that flesh is heir to crowd upon you, as a warning that the watch-work of life is nearly worn out? The hope of an hereafter—that hope, which in your youth was forgotten—now presents itself; and in its calm anticipation the pilgrim of life, wearied and forlorn, seeks repose in that narrow grave where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. But do not imagine that I am one of those strict, overstrained moralists, who, while they warn you of punishment to come, forbid you the moderate enjoyment of life's pleasures. Many men call the idea of pleasure derived from eating and drinking the pleasure of a glutton—the anticipation of a swine; but it is not so. There is no pleasure in existence equal to the gratification of a natural desire. Ask the man who has toiled in the burning sun of Jamaica what is his greatest pleasure; he will answer, a draught of cold water. And the food which nature requires is a pleasure even in anticipation, and an enjoyment when at hand.

'Wine was made to cheer the heart of man. The grape was given us to be converted to this use. Are we to be forbidden to drink it? No we may drink it in moderation, and as long as we neither injure our health by excess, nor paralyze our senses by inebriation. It is a gift given us from above, of which we may in all gratitude avail ourselves.' Here the reverend gentleman filled a large claret glass as near as possible to the brim, and, with a smile upon his lips, said, 'I never would drink *your healths* in a fluid which I thought undermining my own.'

It requires very little recommendation to induce a sailor to follow a good example. Bowling filled his glass; but Cornish's remained empty.

'There are many people,' continued the rector, 'who lose the apprehension of death by its frequent recurrence before their eyes. I have heard of the yellow fever mowing down dozens of a night, and of the burial-service being read over scores at one time. It is then an individual loss is less felt than when it comes alone. Hence I argue, Cornish, that when Susan wrote to you at the Cape, announcing your wife's death, you were spared the immediate pang by the scene having been familiar to your eyes.'

'Ah!' ejaculated Bowling, as if a sudden thought, like a flash of lightning, had dazzled him.

'Yes,' said the rector, continuing his argument, and sipping his wine (for he was certainly very fond of moralizing upon death, and not indifferent to the juice of the grape in moderation), 'yes, I say, the very circumstance of standing amongst heaps of the slain must always alleviate the remorse a man would experience if, for instance, the announcement of a friend's death should come in a moment of conviviality.'

It was in an instant clear to Bowling that Cornish never cared one straw for his wife; for he was present at the dinner, and had showed the signature of the black-edged letter, whilst the jovial song and the flying bottles were fast tending to dissipation. He felt an inconceivable desire to taunt him before the rector, who evidently was not overfond of him; to brand him with the infamy he had attached to Susan's conduct; and to call upon the worthy clergyman to testify as to the injury she had sustained, even when her hand had penned a letter endeavouring to soothe the anguish the lying devil was imagined to suffer. He sat very unquietly, very uneasily in his chair; and his restless manner denoted the spirit stirring within him.

'I'll gulp it down,' he said to himself, 'and nourish it carefully for a better opportunity; and yet the fellow will think I am afraid of him if I pass it over. But again, it would ill become me, the friend of Susan, to stir up a broil in the house into which she has so recently introduced me.'

Cornish now found himself like a lion in a toil, and he determined to break through the restraint by conversation. He spoke of the last county ball; of the prospect of the crops; and although the rector answered, it was evident the morning's rencontre was not quite obliterated from his mind. He might have forgiven him, for such was his disposition; but he could not forget: his memory was much too good for that. Bowling felt himself uneasy; Cornish was in agony; and the bottle having been finished, the rector said, 'Gentlemen, as I am the oldest man, and belong to the steadiest profession, I propose we join the ladies.' Bowling pushed his uneasy seat from under him, and in a minute was by Susan's side. She was in her bonnet; and as Mrs. Talbot was not in the room, Bowling proposed a walk round the shrubbery, and was soon through the French window in the drawing-room, with the object of all his fondest hopes leaning on his arm. He instantly recapitulated the conversation that had just transpired; and his previous doubt of his rival's veracity was confirmed in his mind from the positive assertion that the only letter ever penned from Susan to Cornish was this one directed to the Cape, written on black-edged paper, and announcing the wife's death.

'Was there anything relative to money in it?' asked Bowling.

'None whatever,' she replied. 'I never mentioned the subject of this money, although I knew it was intended for me.'

Bowling most cautiously avoided anything which might hurt the tenderest feelings of the girl by his side; and now it was that the

gallant fellow, who knew no fear of death, began to fear even for the words he should utter. He believed that after the first dash he could get on manfully; and thus he began:—

'Many years, dearest Susan, have elapsed' (he felt a sudden kind of tremor in the arm he held) 'since you and I parted; but, strange as it may appear, although you were only a little girl, and I a hopeless adventurer, you have ever been before me. I can trace in your present developed beauty the young bud of perfection; our letters have confirmed an affection; and therefore I have the less hesitation in asking from your own lips the confirmation of that which you have written.'

'And yet,' said Susan, postponing the answer, as girls always do, either as a compliment to their own diffidence, or under the influence of that desire to teaze, so conspicuous in the sex, 'you almost believed me a worthless creature, and one who forgot you, and fell a sacrifice to that heartless heathen in the drawing-room.'

'True love is always suspicious, and is always poetical. If you ever had the patience to read my song, you would see how constantly you were ever before me.'

'Captain Cornish says the same thing, and sings his song, in which I am also named.'

'Indeed!' said Bowling. 'Time,' he continued, 'flies fast when pleasure wings it; and perhaps in the apparent moment I have been with you an hour has elapsed. Before I listen to histories of songs, or sweet voices, let me hear you declare yourself sincere in the affection you have written. Here, again, I offer you my hand; and as I have toiled through perils innumerable, and overstepped difficulties which have stopped thousands, in the ambition that I might one day offer my hand to you—and that day is arrived—I implore you, Susan, not to trifle with my affection; and not as a child, but as a woman, confirm me the happiest, or render me the most miserable, of men.'

'I will never do the latter, be assured, Captain Bowling.' And with the firmness which well became her, she put her hand in his. 'Thus,' she said, 'I surrender to you my hand, and with it, you know well, my heart!' And then came the first avowal, snatched from the fond lips of the blushing beauty, whilst her brilliant eyes were moistened by the finest feeling of our nature. Oh! what is there in life comparable to genuine affection!—What are all life's joys and hopes to the perfect oblivion to all around, and the concentration of all thought, feeling, passion, hope, and love, in a first caress!

Those who have studied the art, but perhaps seldom experienced the reality, of love, have, like those writers of voyages who have never left their own country, gleaned all from the experience of more desperate adventurers, and given cool consideration to their statements, and prudent advice to after voyagers, which the real traveller has omitted. Hence we are told, that the declining hour of day, when the last chirrup of the bird, ere it goes to rest, is heard; when the herds, tired by the day's exertion, retire to slumber—in short, when all nature is preparing to repose, is the best hour for love. The calm scene around, it is said, possesses a power to soften the heart and subdue the feeling, then words of affection find a ready access to the ear, and the heart is most willing to give birth to tender sentiments. Some, like Falconer, call upon the moon, the regent of the night, to attest the lovers' vows; some, who liken their lover's eyes to one bright star, amid the shades of night, call upon that star; the heavens, and the calm seas, are urged by others; but no poet has ever suggested the first tints of daylight as an hour congenial to love. Smollet, indeed, has mentioned that Tom Pipes, the boatswain, was sometimes in love of a morning; but Tom Pipes is not a very influential name amongst authorities, like Ovid, Falconer, and others. Virgil recommends the heat of the day, when reclining under the shade of a wide-spreading tree; and Hafiz, when the liquid ruby is fast flowing, pours out his adoration in his luscious verse; and whilst he eulogizes the luxury of wine, as far surpassing in the bowers of Mosellay even what Eden could ever boast, finishes his soul-stirring song in a strain of the most impassioned tenderness.

It might have been the calmness of the evening, the death-like repose of all around, that found a sympathy in Bowling's heart; for he never burst into any wild expression of delight, or swore by all the moons and stars that ever lighted the Atlantic. But the caress was long and close; and in that caress he swore unalterable affection. They wandered about, Susan's hand in his, and talked over early days, of all the changes and chances each other had experienced; and lastly, for love is very selfish, and scarcely can spare one minute from itself, of the German doctor. Not one word had been heard of him for years; and although Bowling might hope for some money from that quarter, yet it could not be worth while losing one minute of Susan's company to run after expectations from a dog-stealer.

'I can never bring myself to believe I was his son,' said Bowling. 'Indeed, often and often, when his wife beat me, I can remember her calling me a vile foreigner, come to eat up her victuals; and when she used to urge the old man to make me useful, by sending me out to steal dogs, the old fellow frequently said, "No, no, if he was my son, he might follow my steps; but one of these days who knows who he may be?" But if ever I asked any questions, such as who I was, I was

quieted much in the way he quieted a refractory dog.'

The rector's voice was now heard calling Susan; and by an application to the watch, it was found that the lovers had remained out more than an hour. They perceived then that the sun had set; and they went home by the light of the moon. The old rector seemed pleased beyond description; and when Susan came in he took her hand, and said, playfully, 'Employ me; I'll do the business of my office most satisfactorily.' Then added, more gravely, yet not with less pleasure, 'How happy you look, my child!'

Cornish was the only gloomy one: he had been favoured by an explanation from Mrs. Talbot. She wished Susan, believing Bowling killed, to marry her son-in-law; but now she urged him not to think of it, as she had ever been attached to Bowling. Cornish sat thoughtful and silent. And after tea, both Susan and Mrs. Talbot asked him to sing his song, which Susan had arranged for the piano. There was no getting off. He sang well; he had no cold; and in spite of an endeavour to cough, his voice was clear.

As if singing his own dirge, he sang the very song Bowling had sung and composed at the Cape; at the conclusion of which, as the old rector complimented him on the feeling of the verse, Bowling volunteered one in much the same style and strain, and which satisfied the rector that the first song was written by the man who had sung the last. Time wore away; at eleven each man departed. The rector struck across the fields; but Cornish, who waited behind, had to follow the same road as Bowling. Bowling promised to breakfast with his Susan; and with a light heart and merry countenance, left the house for his own inn.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH THERE IS SOME ACCOUNT OF A NAVAL AND MILITARY ENGAGEMENT, REPAIRING DAMAGES, AND THE UNWELCOME VISITATIONS OF GHOSTS.

'THERE'S enough of love for this time,' said Bowling to himself; 'now for a little touch of war. There can be no doubt of this fellow's bungling villainy; he thought that a man's mind could not reach from the Cape, or his love keep warm over so much water. He is a good-sized fellow, but I am as sturdy as he is—with my heart in the right place—with right on my side—hurrah for the open road!' And he ran, more than walked, to clear the ground which he considered as a neutral port, out of which all was fair. He passed the gate and the cottage, and having surmounted the hill, awaited in patience the arrival of Captain Cornish.

Cornish, on leaving the house, seemed to anticipate some awkward rencontre; and feeling how excessively unpleasant must be any explanation, and wishing to take some time to endeavour in his mind to reconcile the difference, he thought of striking across the lawn, and taking a path familiar to him. It was his nearest way besides, and one which, on fine nights, he invariably took; but then it occurred to him his deviation from the ordinary road might be mistaken for fear, and if Bowling was waiting for him, it was a species of cowardice to avoid him. And as to brute courage, he had enough of that to make a hero; so, flourishing his cane, he resolved to take the road, and accordingly pursued his journey. At first he thought the gallant captain had purposely avoided him; and as he came to the foot of the hill he slowly ascended, quite sure that his adversary had gone home. A man who has made up his mind to a thing, and finds just the contrary to be the case, is generally, what the sailors call, taken flat aback at finding his mistake; and it requires some time to box the yards round. He sauntered up the hill, and at the top he saw a man patiently awaiting his arrival.

'Captain Cornish, I believe!' said Bowling.

'The same, at your service,' replied Cornish.

'The common observances of society, sir, forbade my expressing myself to you in the manner I now intend to do.'

'Indeed!' said Cornish, having quite recovered himself; 'then pray do not mince the matter, but let us understand the affair, and we can settle it to-morrow.'

'I shall leave that alternative to you. You have most infamously traduced the character of Miss Susan Monckton.'

'Stop, sir,' said Cornish; 'am I to understand you are the Don Quixote of England, running about to redress maids' grievances?'

'You are to understand in me, sir, the affianced husband of Miss Susan Monckton, and as such, the proper protector of her honour—as such I brand you as a villain! Again, sir, I have no hesitation of affixing to your other titles that of the most unprecedented liar!—and, from the manner in which you attempted to rob me of my bet, I may add, almost as great a swindler!—You seem to stand unmoved, sir, under these epithets?'

'Why, I am thinking whether I shall throw you over or upon that quick-set hedge, or if I shall treat you with the contempt I think such a fellow deserves, who pretends to faint in a chair when he is to fight a duel, and has his coxswain behind him to support his trembling carcase.'

'This is the way I will answer that,' said Bowling, as he sprang upon him and seized him by the throat—'and thus, at any rate, I administer some chastisement.' As he said this, he applied a small cane most vigorously

across the fellow's shoulders; for he had established a command over him, and kept him twirling round. Cornish soon liberated himself from the grasp; but he had received the insult.

'Now, sir,' said he, 'I will treat you in the manner such a ruffian deserves to be treated.' And he began to manifest his knowledge in the art of boxing.

'Happen what may,' replied Bowling, 'I have horsewhipped you, sir;—your superior strength may avail you here, but the insult remains marked across your shoulders. Come on, sir!'

There was no need of the invitation. Cornish ran at him like a bull, and received a very well-placed blow just on the point of the proboscis, which checked the rush. But Bowling was in the hands of a much more powerful man than himself, and he soon felt the tide of victory setting against him. Still he clung to his adversary with determined grasp, and made a good resistance. There could, however, be no chance for him; each moment he became weaker; and Cornish had already said, 'Wait a moment, and I'll administer such a flagellation with your own cane as will give you a good idea of its virtue;' when the combatants were interrupted by the arrival of a cart. The carter immediately stopped, and came to share in the fun. He was a brawny, athletic man, the master of both in strength. Seeing that Bowling was getting the worst of it, he recommended a surrender; and at this moment Bowling was felled by Cornish, who snatched up the cane and caught hold of him by the collar.

'Stop there, zur!' cried the carter; 'fair play's a jewel; and striking a man when he's down is not the work of an Englishman. Dang it, zur, let un go!—or I'll pitch it into you, you may depend!'

Cornish had raised his cane, when the carter interposed in earnest, and taking the cane from his hand, separated the combatants. Cornish turned round upon the carter, as he said, 'The disgrace is the same, Captain Bowling; you will consider yourself caned.' And he commenced active war upon the carter, who settled his business, leaving him unable to stir.

'I shall do my duty to you, sir,' said Bowling, 'as a Christian, and I shall send you some assistance; in the meantime, I am to be found at the Eagle.'

Bowling quickened his pace; and having arrived at the inn, begged some conveyance might be sent for Captain Cornish, who, he said, had been rudely assaulted by a carter; thus in some measure disguising, yet speaking, the truth.

When left to his cool reflection, Bowling was satisfied that his conduct was unjustifiable. In all cases of insult, one remedy, and only one, is open to a gentleman. No man is justified in assaulting another. If the white feather is shown, the man is sufficiently degraded by being excluded from society, or so cautiously received, and so sneeringly derided, that being 'cut' altogether is preferable. It is here the weaker man is rendered secure from the superior strength of an adversary—the recourse to the duel equalizing the parties; but surely there is no absurdity greater than the modern mode of duelling. Supposing a man to elope with another man's wife—admitted no greater injury can be done that man, more especially if he have a family—the injured husband seeks personal *satisfaction* (a more misapplied word never swelled the hosts which constitute a volume). The amatory gentleman is paraded, but he is told that he must on no account fire; and the other party seeking redress is perfectly aware that his adversary is a nominal adversary, and that a bundle of straw sewed up in canvas is not more inoffensive than his victim.

Now, the very act of firing with an intention to kill is murder aforethought, and the very worst kind of murder; for what can be more cowardly, more like an assassin, than firing at a man placed at twelve paces, who you know has pledged his honour not to return the fire? There is nothing here to try the nerve or shake the courage of the assassin. The pistol pointed at him is not even cocked, and he might as well be afraid of a peashooter as of such a weapon. All duels where one party is forbidden to fire are nothing more or less than attempted murder; and Peter the Great's plan for its prohibition should be brought into force—'a grave for the slain, a gallows for the survivor.'

Is it impossible to hope, in this age of improvement and civilization, that this remnant of barbarism can be obliterated? Reforms of many abuses have taken place, but duelling, the worst of all, still remains. Prime ministers, princes of the blood royal, peers, members of the House of Commons, and lawyers, in this case, break the law with impunity. A court of honour, properly composed, would obviate every difficulty; and there is many a man who would rather fight a duel and kill his innocent adversary whom he has insulted, than be compelled to beg his pardon. Look at the sharper; his false reputation is upheld entirely by his fighting: he first swindles the man, and, when detected, shoots him, and he actually blinds the public by this false display of courage, or he secures his prey by the apprehension of the man he has robbed. Thus *all* swindlers are duellists, and they are the most difficult men to conciliate, a part of their system being notoriety as one so honourable as not to allow his honour to be doubted.

In France the law now begins to vindicate itself, and duellists lodge in gaol for months, even though no serious harm is done; and

when the treadwheel is honoured in England by the firm step of these gentlemanly murderers, we shall stand higher in our own and in the estimation of our neighbours.

Mortified beyond description at having allowed his passion to master his discretion, Bowling could not control himself. He walked up and down his room, like a tiger in a cage. In vain he painted the villainy of Cornish; he had another mode of revenge without the assault, or he might better have degraded him by giving publicity to his false statements. Then came another difficulty: he had taken his revenge by the first application of the cane; for, strange as it appears, it is true, that although a man may get excessively beaten for his imprudence, yet the dishonour rests upon the man who is first struck. Now, he wanted satisfaction, and the doubt was great in his mind whether he could demand it, or whether it was the business of Cornish to demand it; and making up his mind one moment to desire a meeting, and then resolving to remain quiet until called upon, he passed a most feverish night, and awoke the next morning as little refreshed by sleep as an overtired man, who gets the cramp every time he stretches his legs.

In the morning he sent for Boniface, who evidently was not very well pleased with his company. Squire Cornish was a great man; Boniface held the lease of his house under his father, and the son was most influential in the county, especially amongst the ladies. He lied so much like truth occasionally, especially when he talked of love, that most of the weaker sex gave him credit for his assertions, and when they detected him, about one thousand excuses were made for the man, merely because he was handsome. Bowling inquired after his adversary. He had been much injured in his set-to with the carter, the latter being a professional gentleman in that line, and added much to the injuries he had inflicted with his fists by falling upon Cornish, and nearly killing him. Boniface hoped that his guest was not going to remain long, as Captain Cornish was a desperate man, and although crowners' quests were profitable things to a small inn, yet a corpse kept away many a traveller.

'I had,' said Boniface, 'one proof of that, and don't want another. It happened when some soldiers were quartered here; one died, and was laid out in a room upstairs. There are eight or ten of those rooms, and the doors are nearly all alike. I got over the quest comfortably; for the jury dined together afterwards, and as the weather was hot, they were liberal enough in their orders. About eleven in the evening they began to separate; but one or two were so comfortable, that they thought it was as well to make a night of it, and sleep here; so they took another glass and a pipe, and having been told the numbers of their rooms, they took their lights, and went upstairs.

'I believe one of the gentlemen was rather confused in his eyesight, and saw double, for he had a plaguey sight of trouble to get clear of the tap-room door; but upstairs he went, and into bed he gets, all right. After having put out his candle, it all of a sudden struck him that he had paid for the last glass and pipe, although he had won it from his companion; and being very regular in his accounts, and knowing that people remember things next morning all the better for being told of them overnight, he gets out of bed, and rummages along the passage until he gets to what he thinks is his companion's room, and going up to the bed, feels him there. "Halloa!" says he, "Mr. Webster, I'm come to impress upon your mind, that the last one-and-eightpence you ought to have paid instead of me." And here he put out his hand to awake his companion, who in spite of being rather violently shaken, still remained silent. The exertion made the intruder a little more drunk, and it finished by his tumbling first on the bed, and afterwards in it, where he fell asleep.

'There was a soldier ordered to sit up with his dead companion; but he preferred a little more lively company, and was busy downstairs getting as cloudy as possible, when he hears the sergeant calling for his companion; so upstairs he goes, listening at every step, and at last sitting down at the landing-place. Just at this time up comes a godsend—a godsend, sir, is a carriage which has met with an accident, and can't go on any further, although it never intended stopping at all. There were two pretty young ladies, dreadfully scared at what had happened, for the postilions had run against the turnpike-gate, and it was all luck they got as far as this house.

'I was as pleased at seeing them, as any man could be who fancies himself very poor and finds an unexpected guinea or two; so I gets the house up, and places them all in this very room whilst the beds were making, and a nice business I should have had of it, for the carriage was regularly smashed, and it took two days to repair it.

'Well, all of a sudden there was as much noise on the staircase as if the house was on fire, and the soldier came tumbling down, roaring out, "Ghosts!—fire!—murder!—sergeant!"—and anything else that came uppermost.

'"You need not blow such a horn as that," I said, "mister soldier; if the house was taken by storm you could not make more noise."

'"It's a coming after me," said the soldier. "It is—it is."

'"Well," says I, "it's a coming very slowly, for I can't see it." At last we got the fellow to state what frightened him;

"And," says he, "this is all about it. I left the dead man—" the young ladies heard all the story—"as dead as a herring, and in his winding-sheet. When I goes upstairs, I hears him snoring. I gets in a mighty taking, when all of a sudden the snoring stops, and out he tumbles upon the floor. I heard him scramble up and say, 'I'm after you, Webster.' So I started off, and as I live I heard him speak, although you know he has been dead, and a verdict passed upon him."

'"A dead man in the house, papa!" said one girl.

'"A ghost walking about in its winding-sheet, mamma!" says another.

'"I'm dying with fright!" says the maid, "for I can't go to bed as the ghost's on the staircase." So away they all went like a set of sparrows when a hawk's in amongst them; and there was my drunken man down on the floor, who had got into bed with the dead man, and who was so preciously frightened at what he had done that he's had the ague ever since.'

Bowling smiled, and asked how the anecdote applied.

'This way, sir. Do you see, that Captain Cornish has sworn he will shoot you, and my daughter says he's a man who never tells a lie. Now, if I gets another corpse and another ghost in my house, I may shut up the Eagle, and the Falcon will make a fortune; for more than two years the landlord used to ask if visitors were such fools as to sleep in a house where there was a soldier's ghost walking about in revenge for his being murdered in his bed.'

'Make your mind easy, my friend,' said Bowling; 'if I am shot, I will not trouble you for accommodation. And I'll give you a piece of advice, Boniface, for your kind consideration in regard to myself—do you keep a good look-out on your pretty daughter; and whenever Captain Cornish is in the neighbourhood, be as close to her side as you conveniently can, for I tell you, and you may repeat it all over the village, Captain Cornish is a villain, who would be enchanted at the ruin of your daughter, and she is just silly enough to believe what he tells her. I am going now to Mrs. Talbot's; if anybody comes for me, tell them I shall be back at twelve o'clock. Have you got any pistols in the house?'

'Lord have mercy upon us, sir;—no! I keep firearms!—not I, sir; but I can tell the magistrate, and prevent the murder.'

Bowling looked at him with considerable contempt; and as he walked downstairs, he met the pretty daughter. It was evident she knew all about the business, for she threw her head in the air, like a runaway horse, and never deigned to look at Bowling, handsome as he was, as she passed.

Fame flies quick, but scandal much quicker, in a country village. The poor idiots only exist upon that savoury food, and they dress it up according to their own style; hence the exaggerations always so conspicuous in narrow circles, and the greediness of possessing a story which may be gratefully received by all the surrounding country.

Susan knew as much and more than Bowling. It was circulated that the carter was bribed to assist him, and that both fell upon Cornish at once, and most cruelly beat him; that he was left for dead on the road, and that now, although at home, very little hope of his recovery was entertained.

Bowling, with great modesty, told the truth. He acknowledged himself wrong in the attack; but he urged his love for Susan, and his considering her honour as his own. He dwelt forcibly upon the purpose of Cornish in respect to Susan; and owned the intervention of the carter as a providential escape for himself. Long before he had finished, Susan regarded him as a hero; and he won her heart the more as she saw the man who had placed his life in jeopardy to sustain her reputation. The good-natured rector was informed of the whole affray from Bowling's mouth; and added, himself, 'It was well for him that I was a parson, or I think I should have tried to have dusted his vagabond jacket myself.'

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN WHICH TWO PEOPLE RUN A CHANCE OF BECOMING VERY MISERABLE, AND THE CURIOSITY OF A WOMAN IS GRATIFIED.

In the many conversations between Bowling and Susan, the latter thought it was very odd that her hero never urged on the marriage-day, or never even spoke of it. Once or twice he seemed close upon the subject; but it was suddenly changed, and the maiden disappointed. The fact was, that Bowling would not desire a day to be fixed, when he clearly saw he might be buried before it arrived. In order, therefore, to draw Susan's attention from a subject which he well knew, in spite of her modest behaviour, must be upon her mind, he began to hint the necessity of his going to London, in order to discover the German doctor, and likewise, if possible, to glean the history of his birth. There could be no reasonable objection to this, although Susan thought that he might be married first, and hunt up his family history afterwards.

'Your time, dear Thomas (what a miserable name is Thomas, especially for love; it's a servant's name, and one often hears of "my man Thomas") is very short. Already six days are elapsed, and you speak of a renewal of leave as impossible.'

'Perfectly impossible!' said Bowling. 'I never should have obtained my present leave but for the fortunate circumstance of the action. The *Thames* is now in a forward state; and I have received a letter from the first lieutenant, saying the ship might be reported ready for sea in ten days time.'

'You say that to frighten me. I will not believe it, even from your lips, without I see the letter.'

'Oh, my dear, for the matter of that, your female curiosity shall soon be satisfied; but I doubt very much if you will understand it.'

'That is a subterfuge. It is written, I presume, in English; and as I have the honour to be a native of this country, I imagine I can understand its language.'

'Well, my dear, you shall have an opportunity. Here is the letter. Now, do me the favour to read it out, and translate it afterwards.'

'"Dear sir." That does not require any translation, Thomas.'

'Go on, my dear; Johnson's description of "netting" is not less difficult to a ploughman than a first lieutenant's letter is to a lady.'

'"The dockyard-men will finish caulking the sides to-morrow, when I shall black the bends to give us a little shipshape appearance. The master has suggested an alteration of the stowage of some pig-ballast, to which I have attended. The upper pintle of the rudder is observed to be strained, and the gudgeon requires alteration. The head-rails are altered as you desired, and the hawse is new-lined. The cat-head, which was broken, is repaired; and a fish-davit, on a new principle, has been supplied. They have refused to condemn the old dog-stoppers; the combings of the hatchways are set to rights; the guns are on board, and breeched; the holds are stowed; the lower-yards are aloft; and the topgallant-masts are pointed. We have been detained some time about the gammoning and mousing the stays; but now we are nearly ataunto. The ship may be reported ready on the 22nd of the month. Thomas Smith, A.B., and Walter Jones, L.M., have deserted. I shall write again, as you desired, the day after to-morrow.

'"I am, dear sir, etc.,

'"JOHN SKYLIGHT."'

'Now then, my dear, what do you make out of that?'

'All, dear Thomas, I wished not to understand—the only intelligible sentence in the whole letter—that the ship would be ready; but as for gammonings and mousings, and cat-heads, horses, dog-stoppers, and fish-davits, I confess I was wrong when I thought it intelligible.'

'And yet, Susan, I'll wager my life you would like to ask me a question, and you would blush to do it.'

'What can it be, Thomas?'

'Now, don't you want to know what mousing and stays are?'

'No, indeed, sir,' she replied, with a smile; 'nor do I want to know what cat-heads are.'

It was now Bowling's turn to smile, as he surveyed her beautiful form with lover-like admiration. 'Well, well,' he said, 'the murder is out. We know how long we shall share each other's company; for I am sure you have too much regard for me to urge me to leave a service in which I have advanced myself.'

'As I live, Thomas, if as a bribe you were offered thousands and tens of thousands of pounds to leave the service, and I were to be yours the moment afterwards, I would resign even my right to your affection rather than you should quit your profession. Your old captains must watch your progress with delight, and you must feel the satisfaction of having done your duty—that will give you more comfort than all the money in the world.'

'Money,' said Bowling, 'is one of the necessaries of life, of which I consider the French are my bankers, and I draw upon them as regularly as I go to sea; but when I think of the words of Nelson, and the advice of Collingwood, and when the praise which was so lavished upon me from Jervis occurs to my memory, I feel proud in knowing I have not to thank any family influence for my advancement, but the good fortune of having served with those who were generous enough to advance the friendless boy. Oh, Susan! what would I not have given to have been at the battle of the Nile!'

'You would have been lost amongst the many. This despatch,' and she pulled it from her bosom, 'mentions Captain Bowling's bravery, his coolness, his discretion, his unwearied, indefatigable exertions; but in the battle of the Nile such a description could not be given to one, without offending the rest.'

'Enough, dear Susan, of war and its consequences. Let us talk of that which now is nearest to me—yourself, our love—our union.'

The word was out, and took even the lady by surprise, and she felt her cheek suffused in an instant.

'I will,' Bowling continued, 'be frank and unreserved with her I have chosen for the depositary of all my hopes and my fears. I did not intend to mention the word which, thank Heaven, slipped from my lips, and which I would not recall, because I thought it was doing you a great injustice. I was aware you must have thought me cold; for other lovers would have urged you to have named the coming forenoon, and called the hours the happiest of their existence. Unlike them, I advance more cautiously; and I would sooner wait a month than overcome you by precipitation, and leave you wretched and forlorn.'

'What can you mean?'

'Last night's affray will not finish with last night's salutation.'

'I understand you,' she said eagerly; 'you foresee a duel—you anticipate your death—some secret feeling!'

'Bless you, my dear girl,' said Bowling, as he kissed her glowing cheek, 'I never thought of death since I have been so near my angel of life. Death is very common to us, and we get used to the subject without a shudder, and, as for a duel, I must leave that to your admirer, Captain Cornish. It will not be the first duel we have fought.'

Susan exacted from Bowling the history of that affair; and when she heard that it was for her reputation Bowling had fought even in the extreme of sickness, she threw her arms round his neck, and bravely acknowledged her love and her devotion to him.

'I will make,' she said, 'no opposition to any time for our union. I would rather marry you to-morrow and know you mine, than linger out a month in suspense, in fears, and apprehension. Fear not that I will oppose your supporting your own honour, when thus nobly you have defended mine. I would rather mourn you dead, as my husband, than bear your loss and never bear your name.'

'Generous, noble little darling!' he said, 'you are worthy of Nelson — England's greatest admiral, and too good for the junior captain on the list.'

'Too good! say, rather, for every captain, but not half worthy of Bowling.'

'I fear,' said Bowling, 'notwithstanding the approbation of the rector, that I took a wrong course with Cornish. I might have demanded satisfaction, and stood on the 'vantage ground. Now, at any rate, if I have not sunk beneath him, I have raised him to my level. I am dissatisfied with myself; for had I received a blow, I should have retired to some corner of the earth and died of shame and vexation.'

'You think too much of such a trifle, Thomas. A drunkard might strike you, or a passionate man—and a man in a rage is always mad—might do that which in his sober senses he would never dream of; therefore, as all men are liable to the insult, it is folly to talk of dying of shame, like a love-sick girl pining away in despair.'

'You are right, Susan; I will think no more of it; but with that comfortable quotation, "sufficient for the day be the evil thereof," I will await the consequences, and devote my present moments to you. All the first formalities, thank God, are got over. You have had a refreshing cry over the proposition for our mutual happiness, and these tears are a tax collected by love from all his votaries, which is gathered at the very moment that our hearts' best wishes are communicated. Now, then, I can speak like a sailor, straightforward, and without being obliged to tack and wear to avoid arriving at the point. You are content to marry me—are you not?'

'There is little doubt of that, my gallant captain,' replied Susan, with a smile.'

'Now, we have done with that question for ever. The next is—our marriage.

'What of it?' said Susan.

'When is it to be?—that's all.'

'I never heard in all my life such a question, Thomas, asked of a lady! Why, you sailors are sadly deficient in all those little endearments of love's diplomacy. Who ever heard of a delicate lady who said, "We will be married to-morrow?"'

'Well, then, my dear, since you tack and wear to avoid the point, I will ask the question in your own words—Will you be married to-morrow?'

'Certainly not! Heavens, how living amongst heathens has rendered you a barbarian! To-morrow, forsooth! Most certainly not. What would Mrs. Talbot say? What would the rector say?'

'Why, the rector would say I was a lucky dog; and he is much too generous not to wish me in possession of such a prize as soon as possible.'

'Prize, indeed! Pray, sir, do you use the word in a nautical sense? "A prize!" A ship *captured*, taken by superior force, humbled, degraded.'

'Boarded and manned, and all that!' continued Bowling, as he laughed aloud. 'No, my little Susan; I mean "prize" as a great piece of luck in the lottery of life, in obtaining a treasure I do not deserve—a happiness I could scarcely ever hope for—an angel I could never expect to possess.'

'Then I will marry you the very day after!' said Susan; 'and nothing but my duty in claiming a right which all women have, that of never doing what they ought to do, hindered me from agreeing to to-morrow.'

'You are the drollest thing alive,' said Bowling.

'Pray, Mr. Sailor, are you not much better pleased with my frank manner of replying, than if I endeavoured to evade a ceremony I am proud to acknowledge has been my wish for years? I cannot see any impropriety in confessing a proper, a worthy attachment; and as I hate dissimulation, so I would not worry you by a pretence, under a maiden's blush, that the longer it was deferred the more happy I should be. No; I gave you my hand—my heart has long, long since been yours. And now I will tell you something else—I wish the ceremony was over.'

'By the Lord Harry!' exclaimed Bowling, rubbing his hands, 'and so do I!—I'll be off to the rector—I'll get a license—I'll hire the church—I'll——'

'Avoid Cornish, if you please, until we are married. There—go, and be as quick as you

can in getting an armourer to rivet your chains—take leave of your liberty, sir—good-bye to your independence. Pray go ;—what would Mrs. Talbot think if she saw you kiss me so !'

'Think ! my little angel !—Why, she'd think it mighty pleasant work, and would try its effect upon the rector.'

'Now, don't you be making any remarks, Captain Bowling, upon a subject that does not concern you.'

'No, my dear, certainly not ; and as you are the only subject which concerns me now, I will remark how sorry I am to part with you even for a moment ; and I will leave this kiss in your keeping, which you will return when you see me again.'

'Do go, and don't be foolish ; but you must be back in an hour. What a time it seems !'

'It does, indeed, my dear ; but perhaps caresses are like ships, they are always in better order by being in company—so take this as a companion to the last—they have both got their colours flying on your lips !' He waved his hand, and the happy fellow flew across the lawn to visit the rector, whilst Susan watched him with the eager look only known to those whose hearts are fondly fixed in love.

'You are right,' said the rector to Bowling ; 'for in love, as in every other affair of life, the opportunity of seizing the favourable moment should never be lost. More men lose fortunes from indecision and delay, than make them by assiduity and attention ; but in your case, although you are eager to profit by your few days' leave, you must suffer more than to-morrow's delay ; for you must either be called in the parish church three Sundays, or you must have a license : for the latter, you must go to Exeter ; for the former, you must linger out nearly three weeks.'

The rector soon put Bowling into the way of putting a halter round his neck.

A married man in the navy is not riding at single anchor, when he is moored head and stern with a wife. Again, a married man seldom upholds the dignity of his situation in that service as well as one who has not an establishment on shore, where five or six little urchins are crying out for shoes, or are ruining the parents in ribbons and gloves. The captain of a frigate should keep up a little state ; his table should be well arranged ; his officers should frequently, nay, almost daily, be his guests ; and his rank should be supported by his establishment. It is perfectly fatal to respect, and to the proper upholding of a captain's rank, to place a person in that situation who has nothing but his pay, and a wife to support on shore. We are all children, and duped by appearances ; and unless appearances are kept up, the captain becomes an object of ridicule where he should be respected. Hence, many officers regard the quick advancement of the aristocracy as conducive to the respect of the navy ; for if the service was officered by paupers, how could it bear a comparison with the army ?

Bowling was fast running into misery and want : his future wife had not one farthing ; and although Mrs. Talbot had promised to make up, by her care and frugal manner of living, an equal sum to that which Cornish would not refund, yet it was quite evident that Mrs. Talbot, if Susan left her, would be the daily companion of the rector, who, having a large flock, was anxious for a shepherdess. Besides, Bowling was well aware of the truth of the vulgar adage, 'That those who waited for dead men's shoes, walked long enough bare-footed.' But who sees clearly in love ? Every difficulty vanishes, every danger is dispersed, when an object is to be gained, and love points to the object. The French were to be Bowling's bankers. Susan was to live, like a chameleon, on air ; the smallest possible pittance would suffice for her wants. What signified a house, when a cottage would do ? Contentment would be equivalent to luxury, and the weekly bills would be reduced, in order to husband resources for a future day. Bowling had no idea of expense, and Susan had never kept the smallest establishment. Bowling's money had been gained easily and spent instantaneously ; the prize agent had always some few dollars to distribute ; and when a ship is two or three months at sea, the money remains in the bag, but does not *fructify*, as a cabinet minister once contemplated might occur. In fact, they were properly assorted to feel, by a hasty marriage—one, all the inconveniences of poverty ; the other, the loss of a sumptuous house, and the happiness of having some one else to pay the bills.

The rector gave Bowling a hint that from the day of a man's marriage to that of his death, or his divorce, his hand was for ever in his pocket searching for money, which sometimes was so industriously concealed as to defy all search or discovery. It was all in vain : he had pictured an angel in Susan, and her face and her form bore a semblance to the creations of the imagination. Everything vanished when she was to be gained. He could see no difficulties to overcome, but the church's rites and ceremonies ; he should be the same Captain Bowling, and hold the same power as he before possessed ; and he drew an animated picture of how much more he should be bound to the soil of old England, since on that soil his Susan, his lovely Susan, resided.

Susan, like all women, considered marriage as the object all her sex sighed to obtain. From a girl's first nursing a doll, until the ring is on her finger, marriage is the word most upon her tongue, and the ceremony

most on her thoughts. If the curious in such researches will but forget their own prayers, and look over the books of young ladies, they will find that whilst the elder classes are dozing over the litany, the younger ones are examining the text of the marriage ceremony; and he must be a silly fellow, indeed, who has not remarked that marriage is the subject of most ladies' conversation. Susan saw no difficulty; how should she? Young, innocent, ardent, and enthusiastic, she only looked to the day that would see her the wife of the man for whom she had cherished so warm an affection, and from whom her thoughts had never wavered;—that day was near at hand—the word had been spoken—and both were too anxious to be baulked. She mentioned the subject to Mrs. Talbot, who described the whole ceremony. The bridal dress and expenses should be defrayed by her: she placed a diamond hoop ring on the fourth finger, as a guard for that plain gold one, which was to be ten thousand times more valued; and desired Susan, for whom Mrs. Talbot retained the liveliest friendship, to consider her house her home until Bowling should return from sea.

The wedding was the theme of conversation on Bowling's return from the rector; and on this subject, so familiar to lovers, the whole day might have been expended, had not the servant interrupted the sitting by giving Bowling a letter, and mentioning that a gentleman was anxious to see him directly. Susan turned pale. Mrs. Talbot took no notice of an occurrence which might happen to any one—the receipt of a letter; and Bowling, looking at Susan, and conveying his wish that she should keep the affair secret, and that she would control her own feelings, followed the servant from the room.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN WHICH THERE IS EVERY PROSPECT OF CRUICKSHANK'S SOLDIER GOING TO A BALL, AND A BALL GOING TO A SOLDIER, BEING EXEMPLIFIED.

'I AM come,' said a fine military-looking man to Bowling, as he approached the stranger, 'on the part of Captain Cornish. I feel convinced that I have no necessity to state further to Captain Bowling any reasons for demanding the satisfaction my friend requires.'

'None whatever, sir,' replied Bowling; 'in that respect you have not paid me an undeserved compliment. I am ready to meet Captain Cornish five minutes from this time.'

'Will you have the goodness to name a friend to whom I can apply?'

'Now, sir, I must trust to your kindness. I am a perfect stranger in these parts; with the exception of the rector, I do not know one soul. But as I am perfectly aware that you would see all is fair between man and man, may I claim your acting for me as well as for Captain Cornish?'—Here the military man made the negative sign.—'You will observe,' continued Bowling, 'that I merely ask you to see fair play; for of course no apology could be made—as none, I should hope, would be accepted. I chastised Captain Cornish, not in haste, but under cool deliberation; and I intend to continue so to do, until he has confessed himself the liar and swindler I can prove him to be.'

'I must not hear this, Captain Bowling, against my principal. You are aware that when a man becomes a second in this unfortunate business, he identifies himself with his principal?'

'Sir, you cannot, in this affair, identify yourself further than your friendly services occasion. For instance, you cannot imagine that I have insulted or struck you, and consequently cannot feel the last indignity a gentleman can suffer; and if I am not fortunate enough to find you prepared to be a mutual friend, I must endeavour to procure one. I could pay a servant or a countryman to stand by on my part, and see that I suffered no disadvantage; but on that point I am safe, since you are concerned.'

'I hope—I know you do not intend to insult *me* by bringing me into a discussion, which must of necessity ensue, with a servant? Besides which, I should be unwilling to act for one party when the other party would not be upon equal terms.'

'I do not know what to do, without you can wait until the day after to-morrow? To-morrow I expect a friend at the Eagle, and if that delay is not too long, you will find me prepared by seven o'clock to-morrow evening to arrange everything for the next morning at daylight. I should consider this trifling delay a personal favour to myself.'

'It shall be accorded; and to-morrow I will call upon you at that hour.'

'May I ask,' said Bowling, 'if you are aware of all the circumstances which preceded my unjustifiable assault?'

'You must excuse my entering on that subject with you; but with your friend, I have no doubt everything will be properly explained.'

Both parties bowed, took off their hats, and both felt very gratified when this preliminary step to the duel was over. It was one of the five acts usually played through in all tragedies, over which the curtain is expected to fall. On Bowling's return, although Susan eyed him narrowly, there was no expression in the countenance to alarm her; and not being impertinently inquisitive, she saved Bowling the sin of a falsehood, which, on this occasion, there is no doubt he would have committed.

The day passed rapidly away. One con-

stant conversation of love and happiness soon drove away the hours, and gave to half a day the brevity of a few minutes. So it ever is: the brightest period of our existence can only be traced in minutes; whilst the anguish of the disappointed heart lingers for days, and weeks, and years; and yet we all talk of death, and all fear to die.

It was hard for Bowling to school himself into coolness and discretion. Susan would be preparing to appear as a bride, as he would be standing within twelve paces of a desperate shot, whose great hope of future respectability was in the death of the man who was so well acquainted with the base part he had acted. And yet there was one day more to pass, and love was to drive the chariot of the sun. It came: it passed;—and when Susan expressed her wish that Bowling would dine there, he excused himself upon the score of the world's usage, which generally leaves the bride a kind of figure of melancholy the evening preceding the nuptials.

'I would speak to you alone, Susan,' he said, 'before we part. Come into the garden; I always feel more free in the open air. We sailors, who have only the distant horizon for the boundary of our drawing-room, are always panting for breath, like an asthmatic man in clear air. Never mind the bonnet; a freckle or two will never dim the fairness of that beautiful complexion, or make the carnation on the lips less bright or enticing. Come, come; to-morrow,' continued Bowling, 'we are to be married—and therefore to-morrow is the day which I look forward to with anxiety. I shall not see you again until a few minutes before I am your husband.'

'And why not?' she replied gravely. 'Is not this period the same to me as to you? Have I not anticipated it for years? And now, when my right to administer to your happiness is about to be acknowledged, you seem strangely apprehensive of evil, and talk of anxiety, as though something dreadful was about to happen.'—Then she added, in a playful manner, 'Have you seen a frigate sailing out of Portsmouth harbour, with the colours flying, and Captain Bowling waving his kerchief, as the song says, to the darling of his heart, his black-eyed Susan?'

'Why, certainly I had an anticipation that I might be summoned away at a moment, and I wanted to prepare you for it.'

'I am quite prepared, and in such an event I should follow you to Portsmouth; and before you sailed I should be all I have ever wished to be—your wife. I should not cry like a child over your departure. I know you must leave me; and now that Nelson is going to the Baltic, I know that while you are talking of my carnation lips, you are thinking of him—you traitor to love! Indeed, if your affection is what it ought to be, you should see no one but myself, and be satisfied there can be no creature so perfect. Come, now, tell me, sir, am I not an angel?'

'Ay, indeed are you, Susan—that is, if angels are ladies. You must always bear in mind that is a disputed point, and the evidence is much against you. I thought of telling you of battles, and wounds, and death, to prepare you for what might occur.'

'Save yourself the trouble. I expect battles; nay, I hope for them. I do not expect you to escape altogether untouched; and I almost wish you would get a slight wound, that I might show you the delights of a nurse, prompted by love to guard her charge. If death comes, then I must bow to the harsh decree, and learn from Mrs. Talbot to bear my miserable lot with becoming resignation. Away with you to your hotel, and your last bachelor despatch! I have no apprehensions. In you I see all my earthly hopes; and there, above, is an eye ever watchful for our welfare, that will keep us from the arrow by day, or the destruction which creeps at night——'

'I hear the dinner-bell,' said Susan; 'the rector dines there, and I must not detain him.' A caress was demanded, and, after denying, granted.

'God bless you, dear Susan! May our next meeting be as happy as our parting now. At ten to-morrow I am to be with you.'

'And mind, sir, you are punctual; for it is the only time when punctuality is imperative.' She passed over the lawn, hardly leaving the impression of her small feet; and Bowling watched her until she turned to close the French window: she then kissed her hand, and disappeared.

Slowly and sadly Bowling retraced his steps to his inn. It was near upon six o'clock, and in a short time preparations were to be made to place him well within the reach of death. Something foreboded ill-luck. He was so near all he wished, that which he had so long coveted, all his old songs kept rising in his memory, and every now and then he detected himself singing,

'For believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again.'

It is singular the immense number of authentic anecdotes we have of people having been forewarned of their deaths. It is strange, but it is true, that many men receive a certain hint that their deaths are near; and some who have been accustomed to lead onward their men to the furious assault, warned that the assault would be fatal to them, have become inactive and irresolute, and almost shunned the contest they would otherwise have courted. Nelson, at Trafalgar, when he shook hands with Blackwood, is one instance; and Sir Peter Parker—the gallant handsome beloved Parker—sat motionless in his gig when its keel grated against the

enemy's shore, having himself previously announced his belief that he should die that night. Some have witnessed the strange scene of a midshipman disposing of his goods and chattels with all the nonchalance of an auctioneer, assigning as a reason that he was to die that night: and die he did.

Bowling had no alarm amounting to this, but he felt a certain lowness and uneasiness; and Fate seemed to say, 'Be cautious; be steady; be vigilant.' And yet Bowling knew no fear; and this morbid sensation of forthcoming evil resulted only from the excess of hope. He had heard the bullets whistling around him by hundreds, and then he felt no fear; but now he dreaded lest the beloved object, so nearly his own, should somehow elude his grasp. He walked along thoughtfully; and when he arrived at the Eagle, the landlord's daughter, with an air of impertinence, announced that a gentleman was in his room. Bowling seemed hardly to heed the warning; but he burst into a rapturous exclamation when he saw the visitor, and thus addressed him—'Thanks, doctor, thanks! you have surpassed my expectations by one hour. I have business of some importance for you, which we shall discuss at and after dinner.' He rang the bell, and ordered dinner directly.

'I have only three days' leave, sir,' began the doctor. 'I must be off to-morrow to my new ship.'

'What, have you got promoted also?'

'If not promotion, a better appointment; for I am transferred to the *Blanche*, under the command of a man who will not fail to bear in mind what he considered a former insult—Captain the Honourable William Curlew.'

'What, is Curlew promoted?'

'He is; and I suppose for his having got his brig safe back to England. Now, sir, for our business here.'

'The old story, doctor;—Cornish. I took the liberty of laying my stick across his shoulders, and he has called me out. His second will be here in about half an hour. His story of Susan was false, as usual, from beginning to end; I insist on the bet being paid; and by way of jumbling up all my news, so that we may unravel at discretion, I am to fight to-morrow morning, and be married at eleven o'clock, if I am alive.'

'You have managed to get sufficient employment on your hands, at any rate. Of course, there is nothing to be done in one instance but to shoot; nor in the other, but the noose.'

'I think, since I can prove that Susan never did write to him for money, and here it is in her own handwriting, that I can demand the payment of the bet before we fight; for I would not have that egregious liar shoot me first, and cheat me afterwards. Help yourself to some wine. How does my frigate look? Come, you must be bottle-holder and newspaper all at once; and as you take in your provisions and wine, you must unload yourself of your intelligence.'

'Another gentleman!' said the landlord's daughter. 'Show him in,' said Bowling. 'Now then, doctor, as quick as you like; I'll leave you with him in a moment.'

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN WHICH THE FIGHTING DOCTOR IS READY TO ACCOMMODATE ANY LOVER OF THE ART, AND LOVE ATTEMPTS TO THWART ALL PROSPECTS OF A CIRCUMSTANCE.

'I AM perfectly informed,' began the doctor to the stranger, 'of all the circumstances of this case, and I think we shall not waste many words in our arrangements.'

'Of course not,' said the courteous stranger. 'There is only one alternative when a blow has been received; and therefore the preliminaries are, we may almost say, arranged.'

'Not quite, sir,' said the doctor. 'You are aware, I suppose, that this assault arose out of a——'

'I beg your pardon, sir, for the interruption, but I cannot see the necessity of seeking for the cause of the quarrel. My principal has been struck, and he requires satisfaction.'

'True, sir, true; and he shall have it, at the time and place you mentioned, that is, at daylight, in the fourth field to the right on the London Road, on leaving the village.'

'Then, as all is settled, I will not interrupt your dinner any longer.'

'Stop, sir, a moment; pray do not misunderstand me. The satisfaction which you demand shall be given the very instant Captain Cornish pays the sum of two hundred pounds, to which amount he is indebted to Captain Bowling.'

'I have no instructions from my principal on this head; and I trust no gambling transaction will interfere with a course so smooth, so direct as ours.'

'I warn you, sir, of two things: first, that we shall be to our appointment; secondly, that I shall not place my man on the ground until the sum is paid. With this understanding, I wish you good afternoon.'

'I as plainly intimate to you, sir, that I know nothing of this money affair, and that I shall not allow of any subterfuge to evade the duel.'

'Your words, sir,' said the doctor, 'are ill-assorted; and I must, I suppose, attribute them to the zeal you have manifested to your principal, not to any intention of insulting me.'

'Not in the least, sir. The duel is a plain, downright, legitimate affair. Its cause is the

assault, and I will not enter into any other subject.'

'I have mentioned my intentions, sir, and I am not likely to swerve from the course I have decided to take.'

'Upon my honour,' said Cornish's second, bristling up, and speaking with an accent which betrayed his origin from the Emerald Isle, 'this is the most extraordinary proceeding I have ever listened to. Do you *mane* to say, sir, if this money is not paid, your man won't fight?'

'He would fight, but *I* will not allow him.'

'Why, we shall be obliged to post him.'

'The admiralty have done that already,' said the doctor, affecting to misunderstand him.

'I tell you what it is, sir,' said the hot-headed man; 'if he does not fight, you shall.'

'I'll accommodate you this instant, sir,' said the doctor, handing out a case from under the sofa. 'Take your choice, sir; we'll manage the concern across the table, or the length of the room, or by the end of a handkerchief.'

'No,' said the second, evidently surprised at the readiness of the doctor; 'I do not see how this will forward the business which I came about. If there is any dispute, we had better settle it after the first duel.'

'After or before, sir, just as it suits your convenience. But remember this, the folly of posting Captain Bowling for cowardice will only entail ridicule on yourself; and I hope my readiness to accommodate you will convince you that there will be no occasion for you to have recourse to that, as far as I am engaged. Then until to-morrow, sir, good-day.'

A shuffling of feet was heard at the door; and some rapid footsteps downstairs convinced the doctor that this little scene had not been without an audience.

The Irish gentleman appeared a little disconcerted. Although a practised hand in the secondary line, he had evidently now met his match, and one who was as cool as a winter's morning. He was quite aware that the forthcoming day would be big with events, and that no duel would take place between the principals, without Cornish would confess himself a liar, or something worse, in the payment of the money.

Bowling and the doctor sat down to finish their wine, and flavour their palate with strawberries and cream. The subject was never reverted to. The only precaution being requisite was to be called in time; and this the doctor undertook to look after, making as an excuse that he was anxious to return before day-light.

Often and often have the features and the words of a man been watched, who had to fight a duel in the morning. It is not when he is actually brought to the scratch that the slightest symptom of fear is manifested: he has made up his mind to the operation, and he has steeled and strung his heart to the sticking-post. But it is when the last 'good-night' is uttered, and the principal seeks the solitude of his chamber, that the gloomy prospect of to-morrow's dawn breaks upon him. It is needless his self-consolation, that out of the hundreds of duels fought few are fatal; the chance shot, which sailors say (to show how wide a range has chance) may hit the devil, *may* likewise reach him. And then so young, so full of life; with every hope before him; with parents who have watched over him, and sisters who have loved him, and perhaps one more who has animated his very existence, to be taken from him; and he to surrender his life in an instant, without the encroachments of sickness or the debility of disease—when the mind, participating with the body, yields by degrees its elasticity, and straightens into death. To be reproached by a fearful catalogue of sins (if not of commission, of omission), and haunted by an apprehension of something after death—the uncertainty of his hereafter—does not tend very greatly to keep the eyes drooping into slumber. Then, how time flies! How the hours of existence seem shortening! How perseveringly correct the large clock ticks away his life! And the first burst of dawn—when the birds carol their earliest notes, and all nature smiles in the face of its Creator—how bright it is, though to him it is but the herald of everlasting darkness! Can any man sleep under these circumstances? Or is it more probable that the night will be passed in starts from drowsiness into the activity of prayer? And then the fear that he may be one moment too late keeps the duellist on the constant alarm; and thus his last night is one of uneasiness and fear. On the ground, the sight of the adversary and the recurrence in memory of the insult contribute to keep alive one of the worst feelings of our nature: and in the desire of revenge we borrow fresh courage.

The doctor had plenty of Portsmouth news to relate, and Bowling had also his share to add to the score. His first meeting with Susan, the song, and the mistake of the rector's visit, all contributed to amuse the laughter-loving doctor; and thus the hours slipped away until ten, when the doctor, with every prospect of seconding one duel and fighting another, wished Bowling good-night, and departed for his own chamber. Bowling wrote a letter, and made a will—two indispensable things for a gentleman to do who is weighing his anchors for that foreign station, the Dead Sea. At last the house seemed hushed in repose, and no light was visible from any casement.

Cornish had been duly informed of all that had passed. There was not a bad passion in his mind but was struggling to be upper-

most. The girl he could not succeed with was about to be united to his adversary; his name would become a by-word and a reproach; all the gaudy plumage in which he had dressed himself was now stripped from him by the plain-spoken sailor; and a greater hero than himself had shared, if not occupied, the attention of those on whose lips his name had been familiar. He cursed him with all the savage fury of revenge, and was anxious for the dawn to settle the affair altogether. He walked nearly to the village with his friend, and, promising to be with him by half-past three o'clock, turned round to seek his own home.

The night was rather dark, and the hedges had a sombre appearance, for there was no moon, and the star-light was not sufficient to make objects clear. There were gates and stiles in plenty before he arrived at his own lodge-gate, and in passing one of these a figure rushed upon him and held him. Cornish was not a man to be frightened at shadows, although this star-light attack was by no means agreeable.

'You shall never do it!' said the affrighted girl, as she clung round him. 'I have heard all the arrangements, and I will easily frustrate them.'

'Why, Mary, my dear, is it you? I wonder the night was not more luminous, since your eyes are open!'

'Spare this nonsense; this is no time to speak of such frivolities. You are rushing on your death; and what will become of the poor, lost, degraded Mary, when her shame must be published, and when, hooted from her father's home, which she has disgraced, her protector—her promised husband—shall be killed?'

'Come, my love, none of these heroics! As for my marriage with you, I have told you it is impossible. Imagine the sneers of the whole county when it would be circulated that Captain Cornish, who intended to represent the county in Parliament, had left the barmaid of the Eagle Inn to mis-represent him!'

'Have I said more than you promised? Have you not ruined me, under the most sacred pledge of marriage? Oh, fool, fool that I was, to disbelieve the world's reports, and credit your oath!'

'You are inclined to be rather complimentary to-night, my little turtle-dove? Why, you are late at your billing and cooing! What lucky fellow has enticed you from your comfortable bed to listen to his tale of love?'

'Oh!' said the girl, heart-stricken with the insult, 'is not this more than I can bear? Oh that this poor heart would burst! That I could lie down, and never, never again see the light of another day!'

'That is all particularly fine, but particularly inapplicable at this moment. You are no worse than hundreds of others. Why, really, my dear creature, one would suppose you were the only girl alive who is more kind than prudent.'

'Stop, for Heaven's sake, stop! and do not make me hate you as I loathe myself. Even that captain saw through my grief, and has advised my father to be near me whenever you are near.'

'Ah!' exclaimed Cornish, with surprise; 'is he as quick as that? I shall not forget his solicitude for your welfare and my honour to-morrow.'

'Nor I your safety and my own. I implore you, dear sir, rather to tread me to death under your feet, than leave me to the world's scorn and contempt.'

'Damn these poets,' said Cornish; 'they fill the girls' heads with nothing but death and destruction. Get up from your knees, child: what are you talking about? "Scorn and contempt!" Suppose I am killed; have I not left you one hundred a year for your life, and entrusted you to the care of my friend, who would be glad to marry you with such an income?'

'Do not imagine I credit one word you have said; for from the hour of our first unlucky meeting, not one word of truth has ever escaped your lips. You swore to love, to cherish, and protect me, and promised me marriage. Have you ever, from the first false step, spoken to me kindly? Have you contributed towards my future inevitable wants? Have you provided the cottage I was to have, and the servant who was to attend to me?'

'Can you talk sense by accident once in your life? And if you can talk it, now answer this—why are you here? and what the devil do you want?'

'I am here to upbraid you with your perfidy, and to save your life. I am here to implore you to remove me to some distant place, and there conceal me and my shame for ever and ever. Let me hide myself in solitude, and grant me no more than is requisite to linger out my miserable existence in prayer for my future salvation.'

'Is that the ribbon I gave you, Mary? How faded it looks! I will buy you another to-morrow. Come, my dear, go home; you really are very importunate. You must consider that thus to waylay me and abuse me is neither proper nor respectful. Go home, and I will give you a new bonnet to-morrow.'

'Heartless wretch that you are! that even I, who have loved you to my own destruction, can find courage to tell you of your baseness! I stood by the door, and I thought the beating of my heart would alarm those gentlemen who arranged your duel for to-morrow. I heard your name spoken of disrespectfully; and how I wished for the strength of a man, to have vindicated your honour! I came to save you, to warn you that you were in dan-

ger. I left the house never to enter it again until I know of your safety ; for yet, in spite of all your coldness, your undisguised disgust, I love you but too well !'

'Don't talk to me about love, indeed ! What kind of rubbish is that? If you want money, say so. I am as poor as any man who sweeps a crossing in London, but I will gladly give you some, if by so doing I can secure your absence from me.'

'Only do what you promised, and you shall never see my face again ; but in solitude I will lift up my prayer even for you.'

'The prayers of the wicked never avail, so you may leave me out of yours. To-morrow I will promise to arrange this matter.'

'How many to-morrows have already gone under the same flattering hope? and now, within five hours of this time you may be killed. Think of that, and of her you leave ruined and unprotected behind you !'

'Don't come croaking, like a raven, of ruin and such miserable cant. You are no worse, I tell you, than your neighbours.'

'Dear sir, do not cast me from you ! For you I have sacrificed every hope in this and in the next world. I shall shortly be an outcast ; for well I know how my own sex will spurn me from their dwellings, and how loud will be their clamour against a fallen sister. Who then can I look to, when my father shuts his door against me, my mother turns her head from me, and my own sister listens with averted eyes to the sad tale of my disgrace? To whom can I look but to you? And can you—will you desert me?'

'I shall desert you now, at any rate ; but just listen to me before I go. I will trouble you not to be quite so familiar in your address ; and another time I desire you will not waylay me on the king's highroad to solicit charity : begging is against the law. Now away ! and let me see no more, and hear less, of you.'

'You shall not leave me thus ; and if you do, hear my resolve, and know an injured woman can turn her warmest love to the bitterest hate. I have your letters, in which you promised to marry me. I have the one in which you propose the private marriage, and assign as a reason your wish that the stupid old lady, Mrs. Talbot, may not know of it, as you expect her money. Dare to treat me again as this moment you have done, and I will bring an action against you in a court of law. Your own letters shall be read aloud, to the diversion of the idle groups who attend such trials ; all your tender expressions shall be sounded forth by the counsel, who shall cut you to pieces ; and if I fail in redress, I will not fail to make you appear the false-hearted wretch you are ! You shall convict yourself, and Mrs. Talbot shall know the respectful manner in which you speak of "the stupid old lady." '

'Take care of your revenge, my lady ! Keep it warm this cold night ! Pleasant lodgings on the cold ground ! Good night !' And away went the heartless villain to his own magnificent apartment.

Mary remained some time motionless ; and then suddenly recollecting herself, as the village clock struck one, she turned back, and, running rather than walking, she struck through the village, and, arriving at a large house, began to ring the bell violently.

A set of spaniels gave the alarm that a stranger was near, and their unceasing noise soon awoke the master of the house, who came downstairs perfectly prepared for action, having a brace of pistols peeping out of the pockets of his dressing-gown, and carrying a light in one hand and a poker in the other. When he learnt that the disturber of his repose was the daughter of Boniface, of the Eagle, and when he had ascertained that she was alone and carried nothing offensive, he opened the door. He might have been robbed, murdered, and quartered, before his servants would have disturbed themselves ; for they, like midshipmen, always stand 'two calls.' The magistrate was told of the intended duel, and of the place and hour. He swore the girl to her statement, and, being an active and a just justice, he shortly had two constables, respectable men, who for convenience' sake resided on his own premises ; and he issued a writ against Captain Cornish and others, for a breach of the peace. He told the officers where to station themselves, and to allow the parties to get almost to the consummation of their illegal proceedings before they made their capture.

Bowling was first up, although the doctor had volunteered to call him. He was anxious to be first on the ground, and yet was exceeding scrupulous as to his dress. He never was much of a dandy ; but this day he was dressed with studied care, as if to show he had not acted under the impulse of hurry. The doctor and Bowling having arrived on the appointed spot, and having ascertained that their adversaries were not in the field, sat down upon the adjoining gate. They remarked a girl, who walked hurriedly past, not without a slight salutation from Bowling, and a medical remark from the doctor, who said, 'Early rising is very conducive to health.'

'Here they are,' said the Irish gentleman, 'in a monstrous hurry, no doubt, to get on the ground ; but I'm mistaken if some of them don't find it difficult to leave it again.'

Both parties saluted each other ; the ground was measured, and the principals placed ; the pistols loaded, and some arrangements going forward as to the word ; when the Irish gentleman called out, 'Git out of that, young woman ! bad luck to those inquisitive eyes. Very well, miss ; just wait awhile, and see if you don't dance

off to the music of the ball. Now then, sir,' cried he, addressing the doctor, 'I believe we are all ready as to our men; suppose we settle our affair by firing across their line.'

'With all my heart, sir,' replied the doctor; 'and we will fire at the same time.'

'I think not!' said a stout farmer, who caught hold of the Irish gentleman. In a minute the whole party were captured; and as they left the field, Cornish saw his ruined victim waiting to receive him at the gate, and at once comprehended the intrusion of the constables.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT A PEACE-OFFICER MAY BE PUT UPON THE WAR ESTABLISHMENT, AND THAT PROMISES AND PIE-CRUST ARE SYNONYMOUS.

CORNISH was himself a magistrate. He seldom acted, because once or twice some young ladies who were brought up before their worships for disorderly conduct had made certain faces at their judge, and had expressed themselves so familiarly, that the case had been dismissed without much justice being done, although some money had been expended. He knew the magistrate who had issued the warrant against him well, and was half inclined to venture upon the familiarity of acquaintance; but in this he was cut short. A cold, formal salute passed between the parties; the statement of Mary was read; and the constable examined as to the preparation of war between the duellists. It was no use contradicting the assertion of the constables, for the loaded pistols were produced. Both principals and their seconds were bound over and called upon for securities. Cornish and his friend were provided very shortly; but Bowling was not so fortunate. He sent to Boniface, who civilly declined, stating it was from religious motives; it being written, 'He who stands security for another shall smart for it.' The rector was at last sent for; and upon the principle that he was bound to maintain order and keep peace, he stood security for both. Another soon came forward; and Bowling, at nine o'clock, found himself free to contract his marriage with Susan, to which ceremony the doctor, of course, was invited.

In the meantime Cornish, backed up by the Irish gentleman, who considered this interposition of the law an infringement on the liberty of the subject, had called at the Eagle, and in very unmeasured language had fulminated his everlasting enmity against Boniface. He swore that from that moment the whole of his custom should go to the Falcon; that the rent should be raised at the expiration of the lease (which had but a few months to run) to such a sum as would render it impossible for Boniface to compete with the rival establishment; and he seemed to chuckle, like a fiend, over the impending ruin of the family.

The blood, the good old English blood, mantled in Boniface's cheek. He was a free-born man, and he felt stung to the heart at the insulting manner in which Cornish had expressed his determination.

'You can't ruin me, sir,' said Boniface. 'I'll take the next house to-morrow—and I'll have a crown clapped on that eagle's head; but I'm none the less obliged to you for the wish—I dare say I can live without Captain Cornish; and my daughter can get an honest living without his assistance either.'

'I'm glad to hear it,' replied the villain maliciously; 'as, for the future, she will not require my support.'

Boniface turned pale. And as Cornish walked away, exulting in the pang he had inflicted on the poor girl, who, as she heard the words, sank down, wishing the ground to open and swallow her as she hid her face in her sister's lap, and cried aloud, he added, 'You had better keep that young lady at home, and not have her walking about the lanes at midnight.'

'I shall take the unwarrantable liberty with you, Mr. Boniface,' said the Irishman, 'to express my utter disgust of your daughter's conduct, and to mention, in the most civil manner imaginable, that if I was not afraid of being put in the stocks, I would make more whales on your back than ever were harpooned in the South Seas. Maybe that gallant captain and old opodeldoc talked loud in order that your girl might overhear it; and she made it an excuse to visit that elderly gentleman, who discourages field-sports by daylight. Come along, Cornish, and bad luck to me if I don't follow that jalap-and-rhubarb officer over half the world!'

The doctor heard it all; and putting his head out of the window, asked politely, 'where a letter would find him?'

'At Captain Cornish's, sir, where I should be mighty happy to find you.'

'I shall not disappoint you long, sir,' said the doctor.

Bowling was arranging himself for his marriage; the time was growing very short; and his chains were already forged. He thought of nothing but Susan, and the affair of the morning had quite passed off from his memory. Not so the doctor, who had a strange predilection for danger: he never had allowed any boats to go on any desperate service without volunteering; and although the most excellent fellow in life, and a man least susceptible to an insult, without he saw it was premeditated, yet was always ready to rush into a duel, either for his friend or for himself, especially if he considered his friend as suffering under any disadvantage. As he dressed himself he kept his blood at fever-

heat, fulminating all manner of curses upon the girl and the Irishman, and vowing vengeance against the latter.

'I'll give him a chance when we get back to Portsmouth,' he said; 'I'm only bound to keep the peace within his Majesty's dominions. We'll see how far that extends outside of St. Helen's!' And thus he continued until Bowling took his arm and popped him into a most cruel caricature of a carriage, a country postchaise. Bowling's portmanteau was handed in; and as they went downstairs they saw that they left the house of grief to go into that of joy. The poor girl was sobbing violently in the corner, whilst the parents stood aloof from her;—the father's eye dry with anger, but the mother's and sister's overcome with a discovery which added disgrace to the impending ruin of her family.

Upon Bowling's arrival the rector welcomed him. Mrs. Talbot shortly afterwards led in the bride most beautifully dressed; and there, in the quiet of a private room, the parties were united. Never did dark-eyed beauty look more bewitching than Susan. She shed no tears; and the fulfilment of her heart's best hope, and the sincerest wishes of happiness, followed the ceremony.

'My fee, Captain Bowling!' said the rector. And the doctor's lips were seen to move in unison with the good-natured man who gave his blessing, and paid himself on the rosy mouth of the blushing bride.

'Married and amen!' said the doctor; 'there's another of his Majesty's best officers perfectly ruined. He never cared what he encountered when his lovely Susan was not gained; but now, Lord bless us, he'll not wet his feet in stepping out of the boat, but he'll have a gang-board to walk upon. Well, Captain Bowling, I'll give you my blessing; and if I had performed such a service as the reverend gentleman, I would claim the same fee.'

'You have my consent to take it, doctor, for you would have attended me to my death, and have been a friend to the last. The rector has made me happy; but you have preserved my honour.' The doctor kissed her hand respectfully; and then Susan learned how nearly last evening's croak had been verified.

Bowling and his bride were to remain at Mrs. Talbot's until the leave was expired, then both were to go to Portsmouth. The rector and the doctor joined in the wedding-dinner; and at nine o'clock the strangers withdrew, and the happy couple were left alone.

The doctor hastened to Portsmouth, being anxious to effect an exchange with the surgeon of the *Thames*, and likewise particularly anxious to gratify the Irish gentleman with a duel of some kind, and in some place.

In the meantime, Cornish had raised up an enemy as implacable as his own second. Notice was given to Boniface to quit his house at the expiration of the lease; and Boniface having found out the condition of his daughter, the state of his mind may be readily imagined. The first blow was severe indeed; for who that has loved and doated on a child for years, can witness its shame!—who can hear of a daughter's dishonour, and not feel it as the heaviest calamity of life!—and who, although he may mutter the word forgiveness, can ever erase the blot which darkens his mind, and makes existence a burden, unwillingly borne? Revenge, though a cowardly, is a feeling of extraordinary influence. How it strings the nerves, and makes the slave it is consuming strong and active to fulfil its object! With what avidity is any tidings received of the individual hated; and when once opposed to him, how deep must be the passion which sets death and danger at defiance, to realize his destruction!

The first feeling against Cornish had only partially subsided in the mind of the unhappy innkeeper, when the notice was brought concerning the house. Boniface, forgetting for an instant his family calamity, sought to secure the next house; indeed, the only one in the village which could answer his purpose; he however found it had been taken that morning in Captain Cornish's name, who intended to establish another person in the business, to crush the unfortunate father, or to drive him to some other place.

However much it may now be the fashion to decry the clergy, there are no men to whom we so willingly fly in affliction, or to whom we more readily resort for advice or consolation. The rector of a country village beloved and respected by his parishioners, is one of the most enviable of men. It is with sincere respect, not altogether devoid of awe, that the labourer raises his hat as his rector passes. Who is so welcome in the cottage of the poor, honestly struggling to maintain themselves, and who receive from the charitable hand of their pastor the well-merited relief, and find it accompanied by words expressive of sympathy and encouragement? How the widow and the orphan look to him for consolation and support! and with what contentment and happiness do the poor listen to his words!

Boniface led his daughter to the rector's house; it was ever open to the parishioners, and he was ever ready to receive them. Hearing that it was the landlord of the Eagle, the rector left his study, and opened the door to receive him. He saw before him a man who, in forty-eight hours, had experienced an alteration the ravages of the yellow fever could not have effected. The poor fellow, without saying a word, led his daughter towards the clergyman, and merely pointed to her. The truth flashed across the mind of the

worthy divine instantaneously ; and as the girl sank on her knees before him, he clasped his hands together and said 'What heartless ruffian could have done this?'

There was no answer ; the father could not speak : his voice was choked ; and the repentant and sorrowful child was bowed to the dust by shame and regret. The kind-hearted rector also allowed his feelings to master him ; and for some time a dead silence prevailed.

'I cannot be mistaken,' at last he said, 'although Heaven is my witness how gladly I would find myself deceived.' The father shook his head. 'Then who has done this cruel deed?—It is your duty to her to proclaim him to the world.'

'Oh, father! father!' cried Mary, 'do not mention him—do not betray him!—I was alone to blame! And had I followed the advice of my mother, it never would have happened.'

'Not mention him!' said the poor father ; 'for what else am I come here? I come to ask all the consolation of religion for you ; but for myself, I come for revenge!'

The rector started at the deep, loud tone of voice, and caught the agony of the compressed lip which was distorted into an expression exceedingly malignant.

'This is no language for me to hear,' meekly replied the rector. 'For her I will do all that this holy book has prescribed ; but for you—"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."'

'There are no words of comfort for me,' said Boniface, more calmly ; 'I must be revenged—I cannot live without it. Who has done this, you ask?'

The daughter sprang upon her feet, and endeavoured by her hand to close her father's mouth. He turned away his head as he screamed, rather than uttered, 'That devil loosed from hell!—Cornish!' Mary fell down at his feet ;—she had made the last effort to conceal her seducer, and now had fainted on the floor.

'Ay,' continued the innkeeper, 'Cornish, Captain Cornish—the man who is called a gentleman, and who lavishes his riches to ruin all within his reach. He placed me in the house I now occupy, for the sake of her who must then have been a child ; having consummated his wickedness, he now seeks to ruin me. Would you believe it, sir—you who only see the bright side of these gentlemen, that, not contented with destroying my home and my happiness for ever, he has given me notice to quit my inn, and has taken the only house in the village, in order that I may lose every means of existence, and be driven from the place of my birth?'

'Poor child!' said the rector, looking at Mary ; 'little do you know, as yet, how cold and cutting will be the conduct to which you have exposed yourself, and how one moment of indiscretion is followed by an age of penitence and shame. Examples are useless ; human nature is frail indeed ; and the prospect of riches, held out as a lure, secures the timid prey. How came you to allow one so much above you in life to pretend to be your lover?'

'There,' replied the father, 'I forgive her. We all endeavour in this world to surpass our neighbours : we all struggle for independence. My unhappy girl fell from believing the words of a villain. I have looked at her desk ; here are his letters, in which he promises to marry her, and again and again implores her to trust to him. She did so ; for what girl would disbelieve these letters?'

'The law will give you some compensation for the injury you have received at his hands,' said the rector. 'I can do nothing but rebuke his conduct ; but you can have some redress by applying to a solicitor.'

'There is but one in the village, and he is Captain Cornish's friend.'

'You will find another near. Attorneys, like parrots, fly in pairs. One is useless ; he would die of reconciliations, and starve of promoting peace. I advise you to jog Captain Cornish's memory as to these letters, and on no account allow them to go out of your possession for a second. For your child's sake, the sooner you quit the Eagle and the village the better : in another county this grievous sin may not be known. But remember, Mary, although the world may be blind to your iniquity, there is an eye above which never slumbers, and there are books in which every act is recorded. Penitence is the first step to amendment. Go to your chamber, and commune with yourself in secrecy. For you, Boniface, I cannot give advice further than to consult a legal man. It is a cruel and a cowardly act, which will bring down vengeance on its author ; neither shall it be lost sight of by me, when my duty calls for chastisement.'

The unhappy pair slowly wended their way home, avoiding as much as possible the public eye.

'Cowardly ruffian!' said the rector, when human nature burst its control, and no ear was by to listen—'cowardly ruffian! to destroy all domestic happiness, and then meanly endeavour to drive the parent to destruction! But he shall find an adversary in me, or rather a protector of the innocent.'

The sign of the Eagle vibrated to and fro in the evening breeze, whilst that of the Falcon had been taken down. The usual labourers who frequented the former inn seemed now to find the inn opposite supplied with better beer ; and even the posting, that once lucrative part of an innkeeper's establishment, seemed partially to have forsaken poor Boniface.

The thunder of the pulpit failed to strike the heart of him who studiously insulted the

rector by composing himself to sleep the instant the sermon began; or, when sleep was driven away by the fervid eloquence of the clergyman, a letter was read of just sufficient importance to turn the tide of thought into another channel. Still Cornish was aware that the sermon was levelled at him, for his good-natured friend did not fail to rally him on the rector's remarks; to which he always answered, 'I find them very composing, and I sleep better in church than elsewhere.'

Boniface soon found out that the rector was right. Although he had lived in the village for years and years, he never knew that Mr. Clasp was an attorney. He thought he made his money by copying papers, and writing some local news for a country paper. The large brass plate on the door of the best-looking house in the village showed how litigious were the parishioners of the worthy rector: for on that was engraved, 'Mr. Pouch, Solicitor.'

Clasp was a clever fellow, and, like many clever fellows, only wanted an opportunity to rise in the profession he had chosen; and he had some small degree of honesty about him—so rare a commodity in that line that it is worthy of record. The story of Boniface's daughter having swelled the list of Cornish's successes, now as plentiful as Leporello's book of Don Juan's infidelities, was known everywhere; and Boniface was saved the trouble of a long statement of facts by Clasp informing him that 'his daughter's misfortune had long since been expected, for that she had been frequently seen walking towards the house after dark.'

'I want your advice,' said Boniface. 'Read these letters, and tell me what can be done. I have got some money that I put by for a rainy day, which, God knows, does not appear very far distant, for the clouds are dark enough above and around me; but I don't care what comes of me, so that I can punish him.'

'A powerful adversary, Boniface!—purse so long that even Pouch cannot empty it; a magistrate; gives capital dinners; single man, looking out for a wife; everybody's nominal friend; and, where they are not injured by so doing, everybody ready to assist him.'

'But this is a free country, and the law is open to all.'

'A pack of nonsense! No greater slaves in existence; and the courts of justice banged close against the poor.'

'But there is justice to be had!'

'Yes, if you pay for it. Look at one instance: the wife of a rich man behaves improperly; he can get rid of her by a divorce; it will cost some thousands of pounds to get *this act of justice*. Let Hodge's wife be doubly criminal, Hodge cannot help her continuing his wife. Did you ever hear of the House of Lords troubling themselves about any person of the name, or any one in the situation, of Hodge? Not you, nor any one else. So, merely in that instance, justice is not equal; and the poor man had better bow down with unresisting servility, than struggle against the power and the long purse of the rich.'

CHAPTER XL.

A SPICE OF AN HONEST LAWYER, AND A SAILOR'S HONEYMOON.

'If I do I'll be——'

'Don't swear,' interrupted Clasp. 'I'm thinking of turning religious, and then no one will doubt my honesty. Let us see these letters. Strong language—very affectionate—considerable love, and all humbug. I can't do anything for you, and so I tell you; and, what is more, I don't want my six-and-eightpence for your visit.'

'But it is a breach of promise.'

'No, it is not,' said Clasp, interrupting him. 'He says he will marry her—how do you know he will not? It is no breach of promise until he marries again.'

'Oh, devil! devil!' ejaculated Boniface.

'Ay, now you have invoked the patron saint of solicitors, I have no doubt we shall get some wisdom. How old is your daughter?'

'Not quite sixteen.'

'Did he take her away?' asked Clasp hurriedly.

'Not he, he would leave her to starve——'

'Well advised there; I dare say, as magistrate, he has looked up to the law. Is she in the family way?'

'Oh, yes, to my everlasting disgrace!'

'I congratulate you, my friend—luckiest thing in life—got him there—loss of services of child—he'll never get out of that.'

'And can nothing be made of his vindictive malice in seeking to ruin me?'

'A comfortable action would lie on that score; but we must prove that he has really hurt your business.'

'Go on with both—all my money, Clasp, take all, let me die in a ditch, or take refuge in a poor-house, but let me have revenge!'

'You must not talk about revenge; you must use the gentlemanly term, "satisfaction." Why, if you shot him in a duel, it would be satisfaction; or if he shot you it would be satisfaction—it's a word which has always puzzled the lawyers.'

'Had it not been for my poor, foolish child he might now have been in the clutches of the devil.'

'Bless you, Boniface, you may be a very good judge of ale, but you know nothing of this world, or the next. The gentleman to whom you just referred is never in a hurry

for such acquaintances: he leaves them here to procure more for his net. Now for business. Forget, if you can, the unwelcome personage you have just named, and all his friends, and let us hear how much money you have got.'

'I'm four or five hundred pounds the better for business; and I had left it all, every farthing, to her—oh! that I could——'

'Don't get lachrymose, if you please. Will your daughter swear that Cornish is the man?'

'Yes.'

'And you have no idea that any lightness of character could be brought against her?'

'I cannot speak—I feel choking with shame that the question could be asked!'

'Particularly creditable feelings, but excessively against information. Leave the rest to me, I'll do all I can for you, and, although I am an attorney, I'll not rob you much. Good-bye; I'll come this evening and take a little refreshment in your back-parlour—we can talk over this business quietly.'

As Boniface slowly withdrew, Clasp rubbed his hands with rapture. 'As good a case as I could desire, and, maybe, very profitable—no time to be lost—put on my best clothes. And now I'll get upon the flood-tide, and live to have a house as large as Pouch's!'

Two days after the marriage, Captain and Mrs. Bowling were on their way to Portsmouth; and Susan's heart swelled with delight as she saw the tall masts of the different ships. The doctor had procured lodgings; and the happy couple—happy as young hearts with slender purses could be, got safe to their new abode. On the table, Bowling found official papers enough to occupy him for some time, and Susan had enough to do to make the house comfortable; for of all desolate places, furnished lodgings at Portsmouth were the most desolate. Luck seemed to follow him:—his request, as to the exchange of the surgeons, had been complied with; the gentleman who formerly belonged to the *Thames* preferring to sail with an honourable; and Curlew, being sufficiently fond of himself, did not hesitate to give his consent to an exchange which would rid him of a man under whose charge he might be, and whom he hated like some of his own poison.

There were several letters from the port-admiral, addressed to the commanding-officer of the *Thames*, hurrying her equipment; and the report of the first-lieutenant was on his table ready to show him that the reputation for activity which Bowling had gained in the *Echo* had not been forfeited in his absence. He gallantly saluted Susan as he appeared before her in his uniform; and she beheld him so adorned, with all a wife's pride and a woman's admiration.

'I must go on board, my dear, for an hour. I will not be longer; and perhaps I shall bring back with me either the doctor or the first-lieutenant.'

'So soon, my dear, after our marriage!' replied Susan. 'I would rather, indeed, be alone with you, than in the society of the most attractive.'

'If I can do without them I will; but look at these heaps of papers, and remember that to-morrow I must be ready to answer any questions the admiral may ask. You would not like me to appear deficient before him?'

'Not for worlds; but I foresee the time is not far distant when you will be away from me, and I would pass that small remaining hour entirely with you.'

'The first-lieutenant of the *Thames*, sir,' said the servant-maid, 'wishes to see you directly.'

'There, my dear—there is a specimen of the privacy of a public man's life. Let him come up.'

The first-lieutenant was a fine, rough-looking man, who had had the honour to serve in that capacity for years; he being one of those active men who were bars to their own promotion—for every captain had declared he was much too good a first-lieutenant to be spoiled by being promoted. Hence he toiled and toiled, and was still a fixture, although a dozen junior officers had jumped over him. As he entered, he took no notice whatever of Mrs. Bowling, but merely said, 'There is a court-martial to-morrow, at nine o'clock, sir, and you are to form one of the court. The admiral has inquired if you are returned, and wishes to see you at eight, at the office. I believe we are to go to sea almost directly.' Susan would have given a deep sigh, but she was not going to disgrace her character of heroine by so very common an occurrence. But she did not regard the first-lieutenant with any particular kindness.

'I will go on board with you now,' replied Bowling; 'and you can return and dine with me, for I shall have plenty to do to get ready for to-morrow. Susan, my dear, I forgot to introduce you to Mr. Lanyard.' Lanyard gave an awkward bow, and coloured up to the eyes as he saw, for the first time, the pretty features of Susan. He kicked out one foot behind to balance his head as it went forward; and he stammered out, 'Fine day, ma'am.' And having made this desperate effort of civility, gladly escaped under the plea of getting the boat ready for the captain.

Captain Bowling found his frigate more forward than he expected; everything appeared to have been done, and done well. There were hundreds of things to talk about and to order, and when he was about to leave the ship Mr. Lanyard told him that Captain Curlew was in the harbour, but not very well; 'and if,' said the first lieutenant,

'he cannot attend at the court-martial to-morrow, you will of course form one of the court.'

'Surely I am senior to him, Mr. Lanyard?' said Bowling, with some asperity.

'He says not, sir; he says his commission is dated a day previous to yours.'

'Very likely it is, for I have never remarked the date of mine: but I will take it with me to-morrow. Here, youngster, tell my servant to be sure and put my commission in my pocket to-morrow: tell him the clerk has got it.'

As Lanyard got on with the dinner he cast off his reserve, and the conversation was animated, although very annoying to Susan, who sat by crimsoning at every word.

'When we came to strip her,' said Lanyard, 'she was very defective. The eyes of the stays were sadly worn, but she looked a better figure all bare than when she was covered with rigging. She has the neatest run fore and aft, from her catheads to her quarters, that ever I saw. From her cutwater to her stern-post there's not a nicer model; and from her head to her stern she's perfection itself.'

'A little padded and bolstered under her rigging,' said Bowling, chuckling at his wife's crimson cheeks, and wishing to lead Lanyard on a little; 'what do you think of her qualities?'

'She's shallow in her hold, but carries her provisions well; her berths are all good; and she never labours much. She works uncommonly well, and is always quick and easy in stays.'

This last was too much for Susan, and she asked, with as much forbearance as she could command, who might be the subject of such very free conversation.

'You shall see her to-morrow,' said Bowling.

'You never saw a greater beauty in your life, ma'am,' said Lanyard. 'I'll take care she's well stoned and scrubbed, and you shall see her as neat and as clean as any quality lady in the land. If we were not in Portsmouth harbour, we might dress her out a little; those colours always set her off. The gig is all ready, and the whip's easily prepared.'

'I must insist upon knowing,' said Susan, 'who this lady is, of whom you both speak so familiarly.'

'Lady!' said Lanyard, with his eyes staring as if he thought Mrs. Bowling was mad; 'lady, ma'am! Why, we are talking of the ship and her boat—the *Thames* and her gig.'

Bowling burst out a-laughing. 'I thought,' said he, 'the letter puzzled you a little; but this conversation has alarmed you. I was just going to give you an account of our bridles, by which we now ride; and our hawses, with the buoys lashed to them; that would have followed the gig well. So, Susan, remember that whenever I am speaking of the lower rigging, or of caps, bonnets, and stays, I do not necessarily mean the dress of a woman, but the things belonging to a ship.'

'A just rebuke, Mr. Captain,' said Susan; 'and yet I should like to know how you dress and undress a ship!'

'Dressing a ship out in colours, ma'am,' said Lanyard, 'is hoisting all her flags to the royal mast-head and gaff-end.'

'Stop, stop, good Mr. Lanyard; I see I am foolish in asking questions, when I cannot understand the answers.'

'Sailors' wives, my dear,' said Bowling, 'must accustom their ears to sounds just as uncouth as a fox-hunter's language, and you must now be aware that what might shock the delicate sensibility of some people is nothing more than nautical phraseology.' A long conversation now took place between the rough-spun Lanyard and his new captain; and the evening passed off well until nine o'clock, when Lanyard took his leave.

'A fine, savage, sailor-looking fellow that,' said Susan.

'One of those, my darling, who never had a Susan to instruct him in his youth, or ever had the good fortune which has crowned the efforts of Tom Bowling. If I can, I will serve him. Your Curlews, and such-like mincing fellows, run away from an enemy; almost breed mutinies on board their ships; and yet get promoted as fast as their age will permit. That poor fellow, who has more wounds about him than Curlew has rings on his fingers, is at least forty years of age; and, being so poor that he can be of no service to others, is passed over in every promotion, and finds himself commanded by such a boy as myself.'

'You will best show how you have merited your own advancement, my dear, by your determination to forward so deserving an officer.'

'Why, as I'm alive, you are going to fall in love with old Lanyard!'

'I shall be more in love with you when I hear that you have not imitated his former commanders, but delighted the old boy's eyes with a fair prospect of promotion.'

'To bed, to bed! my Susan! I must no longer lose the morning hours in slumbers, however sweet. The eye of the captain should seldom sleep, and never appear prying or curious; but a good example is easily followed, and the activity in the captain ensures a corresponding activity in the junior officers.'

It was Bowling's first exhibition at a court-martial; and he felt that very young wish to do justice which is ever uppermost in a generous man's mind. The culprit was a foremast man who had broken his leave, being too drunk and too jolly to return, and who, belonging to the *Blanche*, had been brought on board and, at Curlew's desire,

brought to a court-martial by the first lieutenant. The *Royal William* was then the guard-ship at Spithead; and thither Bowling repaired, arriving, according to his usual mode, at least five minutes *before* his time. His argument was—'I can wait for others, but others may not like to wait for me.' Curlew came on board shortly afterwards; and then Captains Freightall, and Skinner, formerly the passing captain of Curlew, arrived. They both anxiously inquired news of Curlew's father, disregarding, or affecting to forget, Bowling, who very quietly walked on the poop and satisfied his curiosity as to his rank; for in these times the navy-lists did not come out quite so regularly as at present, and the official list on board the *Blanche* or the *Thames* had not the new captains' names. The court was soon formed, and Curlew, anxious to show his seniority, took his place as the superior officer to Bowling.

Bowling was no man to cede the one-hundredth part of an inch of a right; and when he was told to be seated, he modestly hinted that Curlew occupied his place.

'No,' said Freightall, 'Captain Curlew has the advantage of seniority.'

'I imagine not,' said Bowling, respectfully; 'but I can easily set the matter to rest. Here is my commission.'

'Dated,' said Curlew, 'the 12th; mine is the 11th.'

'No, mine is dated the 3rd of the month previous. In short, mine is dated the day after the action for which I was promoted.' There was no use in comparing commissions. Curlew, who had been sick the day previous, complained of sudden indisposition; and Bowling occupied his proper place.

The court-martial was on one of those frivolous complaints which ought to have been punished on board the *Blanche*, and not brought publicly forward to disgrace the whole navy by that now abandoned degradation of flogging round the fleet. Bowling, although young, was sensible how much this fearful punishment tended to lessen the character of the British seaman, and how very little it operated as an example to others. The frequency of its recurrence familiarized the sailor to the sight, as the frequency of public executions failed to intimidate the youngster in iniquity, from its becoming a spectacle of amusement and a field for light-fingered operations, rather than an awful warning.

The usual folly took place of clearing the court a dozen times, whilst the judges got a little hint from the judge-advocate; and thus they concealed their ignorance upon points which ought to have been familiar to them all. And to this day the same absurdity is continued; showing to the man under trial that his judges are ignorant of the law under which they would condemn him, and that, as no counsel can be admitted to bother them but by their own permission, it is imperative that they should have some regular rules which, by the exertion of half an hour's study, may make all captains sufficient sea judges to act in accordance with law and with common sense. What is allowed at one court-martial is denied at another; and hence the general discontent so loudly expressed against those courts, and which hundreds of men have vainly hoped to rectify.

The discontent of the sailor who is tried by captains, and not by his equals, was a joke to the discontent of Curlew when he found the *perverse* captain, as he called Bowling, his senior for ever. The success of the latter officer, from his bravery, skill, and perseverance, was always a thorn rankling in the side of Curlew; and his father's well-timed hint of his irritability under control had ever since contributed to render him discontented with himself and his officers.

The *Blanche* was ordered to the Baltic; so was the *Thames*. Lord Nelson was in those seas, under the command of Sir Hyde Parker; and where Nelson was, there was always hope. He had fought the battle of Copenhagen, and England rang with his applause. Animated with the desire of once more serving under his eye, Bowling, although loath to quit his Susan, urged on the necessary work of the frigate; but Curlew, annoyed at finding Bowling still his senior officer, exchanged into a frigate going to the West Indies. There was the usual pride in this affair. A man always likes to be seen in a superior station where he has served as an inferior; and with feelings nettled even against his own father for not having inquired the date of Bowling's commission, and got his signed the day previous, he read his commission in his new ship; and from his fretful manner the officers were convinced that the ship would neither be in crack order, nor as comfortable as the service permitted.

On board the *Thames* everything went well. There was a regularity that ensured despatch. The men were not broken off from one task to begin another, and then relinquish that before it was properly commenced; but from the talent of Bowling, and the steadiness of Lanyard, they were saved much harassing work, and the *Thames*, the third day after Bowling's arrival, was at Spithead, with top-gallant-yards across. Every man was anxious to get to sea but the doctor. He could not get over the Irish gentleman's remarks; and he wrote him a letter, saying, that although going to sea in a few days, the insult would not grow less by distance, and that he should do the Irish gentleman the pleasure of calling him out upon the first opportunity.

CHAPTER XLI.

IN WHICH THERE IS GREAT CRY AND LITTLE WOOL, AS THE DEVIL SAID WHEN HE SHEARED HIS PIGS.

It was but a moment, and that moment one of intense sorrow. Susan, scarcely a bride, received the farewell kiss of her husband, and, with eyes almost blinded with tears, saw the *Thames* under weigh, the fresh breeze blowing her from the anchorage, and, as if eager to leave the shore behind, every stitch she could carry crowded upon her. Susan thought she saw a white handkerchief waving over the taffrail, and she waved her own as a signal to him she dearly loved, that his last adieu was seen. She then returned to her melancholy lodgings, and that evening was on her road to Mrs. Talbot's.

Cornish forgot the whole business of duel and fighting in the notice of action served by Clasp. And so wholly was his mind bent upon defending this action, and of ruining poor Boniface, that when he met Susan at Mrs. Talbot's, he seemed quite to forget she was married, and held out his hand as if Susan would receive that English token of friendship without hesitation.

The frigate to which Curlew was appointed was soon ready for sea, and sailed for Jamaica.

No sooner had the *Thames* reached the Downs than she received orders from the Admiralty to repair to Gibraltar without the smallest delay. Bowling scribbled a few lines to Susan, in which he regretted his destination, as he was again prevented from serving under Lord Nelson. The *Thames* was now seen flying down channel; and on the 28th of June, 1801, she made her signal to the *Cæsar*, which ship bore the flag of Rear-Admiral Sir James Saumarez. Sir James was stationed off Cadiz, and had with him six sail of the line.

The *Thames* was desired to keep company with the admiral; and Bowling found himself in a frigate condemned to tack and wear, and go through the horrible monotonous life of a captain in a fleet. It is the independence which generally belongs to a captain of a frigate that makes his life so pleasurable. He is generally free from control, sent to cruise by himself, and has no one to rob him of his credit in the event of an action. Bowling's ship soon attracted the notice of the admiral. She was the smartest vessel in the squadron, and there never were seen on board of her any loose ropes, sails badly set, or wet clothes hung up out of sight of the quarter-deck, but visible to other vessels; neither was she deficient in gunnery. The whole world was at war, and sooner or later Bowling knew he should have to try his strength and discipline against an adversary.

Only four days had elapsed, and these four days seemed like years to Bowling and his officers, when the squadron were enlivened by the sight of a despatch-boat, which had been sent from the *Calpe*, then at Gibraltar. A signal for a lieutenant from each ship was soon seen flying from the *Cæsar's* mastheads, and the order book was soon delivered to Bowling. The fleet was desired to be kept in readiness for instant service; and then there was a shout of joy, which demonstrated how very fond men were of the prospect of cutting the throats of others. The news soon got about the fleet that Admiral Linois had been seen in the Straits of Gibraltar. The *Minorca* packet had fallen into his hands; and the *Speedy*, under the command of Lord Cochrane, was captured. These little disasters were not unwelcome, as they confirmed the news of the French admiral's vicinity, and the order demonstrated Sir James Saumarez's intention of trying his strength, insignificant as it might appear, against him.

The *Thames's* signal was now made to look out in that direction; and the squadron tacked off shore with the intention of standing over towards the Rock. Early the next morning the *Thames* saw a boat standing towards her; she was another despatch-boat, which brought the intelligence that the French admiral had anchored off Algesiras; then came those signals which put the intentions of the admiral out of all doubt. 'Prepare for battle' was hardly answered before it was superseded by another, 'and for anchoring by the stern.' The admiral then bore up with a moderate breeze from the northward and westward; but a gloom soon came over all hands as the wind died away, and the squadron were swept by the strength of the current to the eastward.

'It cannot always be calm,' said Bowling, who, though excessively annoyed, was still apparently cool; 'and if we can't get near them, they are equally unable to get further off from us, so we may make our minds easy. It is only a pleasure deferred.'

Lanyard, who longed for the action and the epaulette, was not quite so philosophical, and cursed the clerk of the weather up in heaps; whilst the other officers, all desperately eager for the fray, wondered why so useless a clerk, who evidently did not know his business, was not cashiered.

A light breeze came on at 4 p.m., and thus proved the truth of Bowling's remark—'that it is never calm long where there is a current.' The ships soon crowded all their canvas. At daylight in the morning of the 6th of July, the squadron were near Cape Tariffa; and at 7, the leading ship, the *Venerable*, opened Cabrita Point, and made the signal for the French ships being in sight.

'All right, Mr. Lanyard,' observed Bowling, as he looked at the signal-book; 'there they are, snugly entrapped. We shall soon

see them, and be at them also. Is everything ready?'

The answer may be anticipated. In a well-ordered ship everything is ready, and one minute is sufficient time to repair an oversight. Bowling visited the quarters himself; he saw the preparations complete for the anchoring by the stern. And scarcely had he made his visit of inspection than he observed the signal at the *Cæsar's* mastheads 'for engaging the enemy on arriving up with him in succession.'

'Is there no officer on the ship,' said Bowling, 'who has been here before?'

A dozen anwered, 'I have, sir.'

'Do you know anything about this anchorage?'

Not one had been at anchor off Algesiras.

'I know,' says one, 'there are lots of sunken rocks, or the Frenchmen would as soon have thought of anchoring in the Atlantic. There's lots of guns also. Let's see,' said this young man; 'there's the Fort Santa Garcia; there's a battery on the Isle Verda; there's San Jago; and there's the Tower of Almirante; and all along the northern shore of Gibraltar Bay there are forts; but they can only do mischief by shells. It's the inland batteries, and the flanking position of San Jago, which forms the principal protection to the roadstead——'

'The Frenchman seems to have taken every precaution,' said Bowling, addressing the master; 'he has availed himself of the assistance of all these batteries, and has warped himself close in shore, with all the rocks outside to catch us as we come in; and those gun-boats, although too despicable to be numbered, may be as annoying as a mosquito on the toughest skin!'

It is almost impossible to select a worse place than Gibraltar for the manœuvring of a fleet. One moment it is a dead calm; the next a strong breeze, then a partial squall, and then a momentary light breeze;—there is no place more dangerous for boat sailing; and accidents are as common as oranges. There is scarcely a ship that ever anchored that got away with all her anchors safe. And this must account for the straggling order of the English fleet. At 7.50 a.m. the *Pompie*, with a fresh breeze, rounded Cabrita Point; the *Venerable*, the intended leading ship, lay becalmed on her starboard bow; whilst the *Cæsar*, the flag-ship, with two other ships, were at least three miles astern, vainly endeavouring to get up.

The signal having been made to engage as the ships closed with the enemy, the *Pompie* opened the action at half-past eight; and right well she exhibited her powers of destruction; for the French ships, disliking even this single ship, warped further in-shore.

The baffling winds made the action doubtful, which otherwise would have been a certainty. The *Audacious* and the *Venerable* had succeeded in getting up to the assistance of the *Pompie*, and the action became quite entertaining to those who were not engaged in it. The fire was hot and annoying; the three British ships had four French ships, some gun-boats, and all the batteries, to contend against. The *Pompie* had been in the execution line for three-quarters of an hour before the *Cæsar* got into action; and, owing to the baffling wind, Captain Bowling had the satisfaction of understanding the real meaning of the word 'mortification.' There they were hard at work, the engines of death and destruction in high force. And yet Bowling could not even enjoy the gratification of being fired at. He was out of reach even of shells. The boats were ahead, and every exertion was made; but it was half an hour more before the first-lieutenant most fervently returned thanks because a shell had fallen outside of them.

'It's all that old Jonas's luck,' said a midshipman. 'He's been a lieutenant ever since Adam was an oakum boy in Chatham Yard!'

'No, your honour,' said O'Leary, who had followed his captain, and not his wife, 'it's all owing to the black cat—bad luck to me if ever anything good happened to a man who had a black cat or a parson on board.'

In the meantime never was English gallantry more conspicuous than on this day. The *Pompie* fought and fired as if she was manned by thousands, and had as many guns as Noah's Ark could have carried; but she was in an awfully perilous situation. The *Hannibal* was sent to her assistance; but the *Hannibal* grounded. She had been conducted in the most masterly, the most gallant style; but the sunken rock had caught the keel, and in spite of all endeavours, the ship remained hard and fast.

This morning's amusement now became so disagreeable, that Admiral Linois made the signal for his part of the combatants to cut their cables and run ashore. A very worthy design, but not so easily executed; for the wind which had baffled the *Hannibal*, and had but partially assisted the *Cæsar*, came at this moment to the assistance of the English. The French cut their cables in obedience to the signal; but the light air baffled them so much that the *Formidable* anchored again. The *Desaix* grounded on a shoal in front of the town, and the *Indomptable* upon the north-east point of the Isla Verda.

The breeze, having now done its worst for the French, freshened for the assistance of the English; and Sir James Saumarez made the signal for the fleet to cut, and take advantage of the enemy's state. The *Cæsar* hove to upon the bows of the *Indomptable*, and poured in her heavy and destructive broadsides. The other ships imitated this good example; whilst boats were sent to tow out the gallant *Pompie*, which ship had

remained nearly an hour unable to fire a gun. The wind, fresh one moment and calm the next, now deserted the English, and left the *Cæsar* and the *Audacious* to the mercy of the Spanish batteries. And whilst for a moment the spirit of the gallant admiral surmounted all difficulties in imagination, the painful reality of his position was manifested to him —he was drifting on a reef; the *Hannibal* was a prize—aground.

At half past one the action ceased, leaving the *Hannibal* as a trophy in the hands of the enemy; but not until all resistance was unavailing—not until it was criminal continuing an action in which hope could not afford the slightest ray. She was left aground; her companions had relinquished the contest; her guns were nearly all disabled; the fore and main-mast were shot away, and great numbers of the crew were killed or wounded. Although nothing could surpass the cool gallantry of the English, and no manœuvre, which the skill of experienced seamen could suggest was left untried, the result did not equal the expectations of the gallant admiral who planned and endeavoured to execute the attack. It was a splendid failure; the numerous casualties, more especially on board the *Cæsar* and the *Pompie*, show how desperately this battle was fought. In the latter ship, there was not a mast, yard, spar, shroud, rope, or sail, but was more or less injured. The main-mast of the *Cæsar* was shot through in five places, and all her other masts and yards were wounded in a greater or less degree.

It was in this action (in which Bowling, from the variable winds and occasional calm, was unable to take a very conspicuous part) that Bowling began to see that all attempts at dashing—as it is called—are not successful, and that prudence or discretion are the better parts of valour. Here were many lives sacrificed, and no good gained;—here was a large and valuable line-of-battle ship captured, whilst the enemy remained in security under their batteries. The very failure of success to us, was a victory to them. And in Paris, such was the enthusiasm our disappointment occasioned, that the theatres were thrown open to the public, and the city illuminated. This, however, is no criterion of Gallic success, for the same symptoms of rejoicing took place after the battle of Trafalgar.

Even Bowling, although a young post-captain, could not fail to observe that attacks against a fleet or squadron, moored under the protection of numerous batteries, can seldom promise much chance of success if the wind is adverse. It is perhaps easy enough to get in; but the difficulty is to get out. Had not the land-breeze come most opportunely to the aid and succour of the English fleet at Algiers, the result might, and would, have been very different. With fresh breezes *off* the shore, if you can fetch the anchorage, the retreat is certain; and the surgeon of the *Thames* remarked to his captain that there was some similarity between a naval action and a fox-hunt. Every good sportsman, directly he gets into a difficult field, looks eagerly for a place to get out again—a hint not thrown away upon our hero in after-times.

'Well, O'Leary,' said the doctor, when the frigate stood over to Gibraltar, 'what do you think of this affair?'

'I'm thinking, sir, that I'd be mighty glad if Mrs. O'Leary had been amongst the killed, in her right place—the *Audacious!*'

'Oh, never mind her, my good fellow,' said the doctor; 'you'll never see any more of her.'

'By my faith, I'm very unlike the generality of husbands. I saw a mighty deal more of Mrs. O'Leary—(bad luck to the day I ever shipped that handle to her name!)—before my marriage, than ever I did afterwards. And there she is my wife, and living with another man!'

'Lord bless you!' said the doctor, who was just looking through the glass and saw the *Hannibal* strike her colours, 'he's struck her this moment!'

'Is she there, your honour?' said O'Leary, jumping like a wild cat. 'By my faith, he may strike her until her head's as big as a puncheon! Oh, if those French officers will only take her under their protection, she'd be dead in law, or d——d; and right well I know what I'd make of those letters, if the clerk wants another brace of words for "discharged—dead——"'

The doctor paid no attention to O'Leary; he was watching the French boats pulling out to take charge of their prize. And every time the doctor, in his fighting mood, 'damned her,' meaning the *Hannibal*, O'Leary quietly and respectfully remarked, 'The same blessing to her anyway!'

It is in vain to picture the scene of slaughter after an action, or point out all the horrors of war in cool blood. During the moment of excitement, men do strange and desperate things; but when the affair is finished, and they contemplate the numbers of their friends dead, or wounded, and they see for what trivial objects such hecatombs are slaughtered, they are apt to ask themselves, if the attempt was worth the loss. And in what does the magic of the words 'national honour' and 'glory' actually consist? The young and the enthusiastic are all for war; those grown more sage by years and experience are, on the contrary, for peace and plenty. They see no glory in the sacrifice of their brethren, and wonder how a people can be such fools and dolts as to *allow* their rulers to shed their blood at discretion at the magnificent price of a shilling a day. Even Bowling, now he was married, had some misgivings, which,

had the event in which he had been engaged been successful, would never have occurred. Such it ever is; we are flushed by victory; but a little reverse wonderfully cools the martial spirit.

CHAPTER XLII.

IN WHICH THERE IS A MURDER, AND AN UNDISTURBED GRAVE, WITH NO TOMBSTONE TO WARN OTHER FOOLS.

When Lord Seagull took leave of his bird of similar plumage, Curlew, he gave him a hint that although the *parvenus* sometimes gained rank, they seldom gained stars and honours, best exhibited in a drawing-room, and where every beautiful eye gazes with admiration, and every tongue asks—'To whom do they belong?' 'Go, Curlew—go, my boy; anything shall ensure you "an order." Do something desperate! You understand—let others fight, the reward will be yours; for every star worn on the coat of either admiral or general a score of other men's lives have been sacrificed. The glory does not exist in being killed for one's country, but in getting others to be killed for your glory. Remember *that*, and keep your temper.'

The last portion of the advice might as well have been omitted. Curlew could not keep his temper. He was naturally a haughty, proud fool, who believed all the world his plaything, and that his pretensions to nobility must be omnipotent. He soon evinced his desire to tyrannize, and his incompetency to command. He was one of those niggling, annoying, fretful officers, who, from want of method, always keep their officers and men on the tenter-hooks of uncertainty. Everything was begun; nothing was ever properly finished. There was no regularity in any design, and still less in its execution. Punishments were frequent, discontent universal; and one or two outbreaks of mutiny, which, from the vigilance of the first lieutenant, were fortunately nipped in the bud, only led to severer punishments, the cause of the discontent not being removed by any alteration in the commanding officer.

At his table Captain Curlew was the same proud man: and in any private conversation, a circumstance very rare in his ship, he always enacted king, and was as difficult of approach as a weak monarch guarded by a clever minister. Everything was costly and approaching to magnificence in regard to his table; and here alone he seemed above the narrow notion of limiting the wine of his guests to a pint, that being the quantum it was generally supposed in those times in the navy a man might carry without rolling and pitching with the ship; but the conversation was cold and constrained, generally confined to the qualities of the frigate, the heat of the weather, that never-resting death stalker, the yellow fever, or actions of other vessels. He never indulged in any anecdotes of the shore, or encouraged them in others; but exhibited a demeanour of chilling haughtiness, repulsive, unfriendly, and unseasonable.

When he dined with his officers, which he always did every Sunday, more from the practice of the service than from any regard to them, a wet blanket could not more efficaciously have smothered a fire than did his presence the most trivial approach to hilarity. It was a party of men who wagged their under jaws, and whose tongues smacked against their palates—not to talk, but to taste. He scarcely remained a quarter of an hour after the cloth was removed before he removed himself in the most dignified manner; and as his delicate constitution could not stand strong port, he used to recline on his after-sofa, and in the cool breeze sip his cooler claret. There is some luxury on board a ship when money is abundant; but Curlew evidently thought, as does to this day a celebrated French Baron, who, having asked a friend of his how long he had been in the navy, was answered, 'For nearly fifteen years of my life I have been afloat, and actually at sea.'

'Then you are,' replied the Baron, 'a greater fool from the want of fifteen years' experience, pleasure, and worldly knowledge, than any other man in the room.' Rather a startling fact, most uncomfortably communicated, and which certainly had never occurred to the hapless wight of a half-pay captain before.

Curlew's evenings were passed in solitary grandeur. Wine, that consoler of the unfortunate and prop of the melancholy, was always at hand; but he was in this respect a gentleman, and he took that delicious nectar, cool claret, in moderation; nor could his worst enemy ever call him a drunkard. Sometimes he opened a book; but the exertion was destructive to study, so he would doze on his sofa, look over his order-book, inquire of his steward concerning certain wines, and then, as driven from himself, he would walk on deck to give his last orders.

There was no female heart that beat responsive to his. Love never cheered him with the sweet prospect of return. He cared very little for his father; his mother was dead; and there was not one man throughout the globe who cared a straw, with the exception, perhaps, of his servant, if Captain Curlew was to be hung, drawn, and quartered the next minute. He never knew the value of the greatest earthly blessing—'a friend.' He followed the advice of the dramatist—the world was his oyster, and he could open it at discretion. The frigate was now on the Jamaica station, and it is

on such stations that the kindly feeling of a captain can best be exercised in favour of his officers. There are a thousand kind acts in hot climates which can increase the very little comfort to be enjoyed in a ship, where the heat is so overpowering and oppressive.

No sooner was the frigate on the station than the most vexatious annoyances began, in which the men suffered more than the officers. The windsails were deemed unsightly things, and not one was allowed ; so that below the ship was like an oven. Instead of leaving the hammocks of the watch on deck in the nettings, so as to allow more space for those below, every hammock was obliged to be hung up ; and the most rigid order existed that no one should be allowed to lie about the deck.

In the day-time, even in the heat of the day, the ship's company would be practised at the guns, or at reefing top-sails, whilst the captain was in his cool cabin. But these were minor annoyances. The allowance of water was frequently reduced, upon the pretence that the ship might be at sea longer than was expected ; and this grievance, although respectfully stated by the ship's company as the worst they could experience, met with no redress. There was a black list for small offences, and this was always crowded with names. The victims of unlicensed oppression were kept at work somehow almost all day, and it was quite immaterial to their oppressor if it took place in the sun or in the shade. Punishments were frequent, almost daily; and every officer wished himself out of the ship, as every seaman was prepared to desert. It was the success of several men at Jamaica in this respect which rendered Curlew more morose than ever. He was himself desperately idle; and we know that all idle people are vicious. Annoyances to others gave him some occupation and some amusement; and no cat, with a half-killed mouse, ever tormented the poor victim within its claws more than did the discontented, morose, idle Curlew his officers and ship's company.

The first lieutenant had heard some murmurs loudly expressed—not in songs on the forecastle, for singing was prohibited on board of this aristocratic floating pandemonium—but in plain speech, and rather louder than was consistent with discipline.

'What do we do but work and thirst,' said one, 'whilst he sleeps in his cabin and drinks when he is thirsty?' And another, whilst being flogged, told the captain that he might cut him to pieces, for he would quite as soon die as serve under such a tyrant. There was a slight murmur of applause when this speech was delivered ; but no one could be detected, for all more or less approved of it. That poor wretch was cast off, and had both legs placed in irons. He was to be tried at a court-martial for mutiny, and was told by his captain that if he had any influence, he, the culprit, should dangle at the fore-yardarm. One or two of the men, when he was cast off, said, 'Never mind, Tom ; you won't be long in irons, and the fore-yardarm may have better company.' This rather startled Curlew, who foamed at the mouth because he could not detect the speakers ; and he swore he would flog every man in the ship from the open list, unless the mutinous scoundrel was discovered. The marines were now ordered to load with ball cartridge, and to be ready, if necessary, to charge the seamen.

'Spit them,' said Curlew, in his rage, 'like so many sparrows. I'll teach you, you mutinous vagabonds, to dare to murmur at what I say or do.' Scarcely had he finished this beautiful specimen of oriental despotism, when a small ball of rope-yarn was thrown from the dense mass of seamen, and hit the captain in the face.

It was now evident enough that a mutiny existed. The officers all had on their side-arms ; and the first lieutenant rushed into the thickest of the men, in order to seize the culprit. The men opened for him on both sides ; and he heard distinctly, 'Don't hurt him ; he can't help it ; he's a good one.'

The master, who was a bold fellow, with a cool head, approached the captain, and in a low voice advised him to 'pipe down,' in order that the officers might get some fire-arms ; but the prudent advice was coldly received, and not acted upon : but on the return of the first lieutenant it was again suggested, and then complied with. The marines were kept under arms, and the sentinels at the cabin and gun-room doors were doubled, a small detachment being kept on the main-deck, with orders to disperse any group of men.

Curlew could not credit either his ears or his eyes ; and instead of at once calling the officers together and warning them of the necessity of being armed, and then of inquiring the cause of complaint in order to remedy it, he retired to his cabin, sent for the master, and desired him to shape a course for Jamaica. He then desired the first lieutenant to turn the hands up to reef top-sails, and whilst the men were aloft to have the marines under arms, and seize all those most suspected.

It was done. The men, as usual, flew aloft ; and when on the yards reefing, the marines were placed, and about twenty of the worst characters were called down, and were put in irons ; some were lashed to ring-bolts ; and four were secured to the after part of the booms. They all submitted without a murmur, and the calm silence of the rest convinced Curlew he had by this active measure secured obedience.

As yet it was doubtful if any regular

organized plan existed on board; for the men had never grouped together, as is generally observed before there is any outbreak. Each appeared to shun the other; they passed each other with sullen looks in positive silence; and the ship was like a vast grave, with ghosts gliding about.

The men were well aware that the course had been altered, and that they were returning to Jamaica. The sea-breeze blew fresh, and the next evening they would make the Blue Mountains. At sun-set the wind went down a little; the men were mustered at their quarters; and the reef taken in was now mended. Everything was executed with alacrity; it was impossible even for Curlew to find fault; the watch was called as usual; and even the first lieutenant congratulated himself that the active measures already taken would damp any disposition to positive mutiny, before the ship got back to Port Royal.

Curlew was the least apprehensive of any. He thought, with the Persian tyrant mentioned by Morier in Zohrab, that the words, 'I am the Shah,' would still even an insurrection, and stop the murderer's hand. He sat down as usual, and watched the silvery wake of his frigate; and so confident was he in his security that he never gave additional orders for vigilance, but, as usual, sipped his claret, and wrapped himself up in the mantle of his own greatness. His steward loitered more than was necessary in his cabin, which at last he noticed in his kindest tone, 'What the devil are you doing there all this time?'

'I was waiting, sir, to know if I am to place your pistols in the cot.'

Some strange fancy came over the captain to condescend a little, and he continued by asking the question, 'Why do you fancy I require the pistols to-night, steward?'

'After what has happened to-day, sir,' said the man, 'I thought you might wish to have them.'

'Indeed! and pray, steward, do you think the precaution requisite?'

'Indeed I do, sir; and if I might make so bold as to speak, I think I could convince you of the necessity of being prepared.'

'Speak out like a man,' said Curlew, filling his glass.

'There's some disturbance plotting about the ship, sir.'

'How do you know?'

'Because the men are so quiet, sir.'

'And is quiet and orderly behaviour a sign of discontent?'

'They say, sir, it's always unnaturally calm before a hurricane; and I suspect that the doctor is right when he remarks, that men more or less follow nature in everything.'

'None of your doctor's remarks, if you please, sir; have you nothing else to say?'

'Nothing, sir, but this: that I have been your steward in every ship you have been in, and I never knew one in such a state as this is. Not one of the men will speak to me, sir; and I am only doing my duty to you, sir, in praying you to be alive to-night.'

There was something in the steward's manner that even alarmed the aristocratic dignity of Curlew. 'Speak out, steward,' he said: 'if you have served me so long, and never left me, I cannot be very frightful in your eyes. What have you heard?'

'I have not heard anything, sir; but I have seen the men pass each other making the same signs, and a sailor never makes signals excepting when the wind's likely to change. I've been with you now, sir, many a cruise; and although there was some discontent on board the brig when we left off the chase of that frigate——'

'Never mind that, steward,' said Curlew, rather disgusted at any remark which, by any possibility, could have allusion to Bowling; 'go on.'

'I was going to say, sir, that that was nothing to this morning's work.'

'You're a fool,' said Curlew, who never before had indulged in so protracted a conversation. 'You may go to bed; I shall not want you any more to-night.'

'I hope you won't, sir; indeed I do.'

'Tell the officer of the watch to come to me.'

The steward departed; the officer appeared. 'Is everything quiet in the ship?'

'Everything, sir. The midshipman of the watch has just gone the rounds, and has reported that he never knew the ship more quiet.'

'Enough, sir,' interrupted Curlew, who made a dignified inclination of the head, which is known under the description of 'bowing out.'

With all these assurances, and with the double guard at his door, Curlew felt uneasy; and yet, considering there was no real apprehension, as the ship gallantly pursued her course, and on the following morning in all probability she would meet some other cruiser, and then he could have protection from her, if requisite, not troubling himself by the muttering of any prayer, he threw himself into his cot and was soon asleep. At midnight the watch was relieved. Everything appeared as usual; the men mustered on the lee side, and as they answered they passed over to windward before the capstan, and went forward. The officer of the first watch was in conversation with his successor for the four hours' tramp, when they overheard the quick repetition of the word, 'Now—now—now.' They had been leaning over the weather gangway, and, on turning round, they found that between them and the capstan some twenty or thirty seamen were congregated; and before they could force their way aft they were both seized, their hands

lashed behind them, their legs secured, and their mouths gagged.

'Overboard with them at once, Bill,' said a boatswain's mate, who was evidently the ringleader. 'Cast adrift those prisoners! Come, look sharp!'

Before any struggle could be made, or any assistance afforded, the mutineers advanced; the two lieutenants were seized in their rude arms; and, as their lips vainly attempted to implore mercy, a heavy splash was heard, and the deep and silent sea engulfed them. The ship soon left the place where these two innocent men were committed to their secret graves, and no friendly voice ever offered a prayer for their eternal repose. It was the work of little more than a moment, though the consummation of a well-digested plan. They were unresistingly seized, and swung backwards and forwards three times, when one man called out, 'Launch oh!' and the murder was completed.

CHAPTER XLIII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THE DANGER AND CONSEQUENCES OF PROMOTING UNFIT PEOPLE TO COMMAND.

THE tyranny and the ignorance of Curlew had left the men little else to do than to die themselves, or to hand over their officers to a similar fate. Of the whole ship's company not ten would have opposed the mutiny; and even some of the marines, generally the most faithful and loyal corps in any service, had given their consent, and now aided and abetted in the work of destruction. The midshipmen of the watch were gagged and taken forward as prisoners, whilst one of the mates, striving, by a loud cry, to awake the officers below, was stopped in his laudable endeavours by being precipitated headlong over the taff-rail, and instantly drowned.

Before any further proceedings were taken, the ship was hauled to the wind on the larboard tack, and all sail set to gain the coast anywhere between Santa Martha and Maracaibo. This alteration of the course, with the sudden heeling of the ship to starboard, awoke the captain, and ever ready when awake to annoy, or to cause alarm, he rang his bell. The sentinel at the cabin-door was one of the marines who had joined the mutineers; without the least hesitation he entered and answered the bell by saying, 'Sir?'

'Tell the officer of the watch I want him,' said Curlew.

'Yes, sir,' said the sentinel.

The boatswain's mate, who now commanded the ship in reality, was in no manner disposed to spoil his revenge by at once getting the captain on deck, and committing him to the deep. He knew that all the men were faithful to the plan about to be executed; and therefore, without being alarmed at the summons, he ordered about ten men to go to the cabin-door, and there remain quite quiet, only securing the captain in the event of his endeavouring to force his way on deck. A large detachment of the crew now went below, and every officer of the ship was secured in a few minutes without the slightest resistance; for so well was it arranged that every one of them were made prisoners at the same moment.

Again the cabin bell rang violently.

'He is in a hurry to die,' said the boatswain's mate; 'but I'm not in such a hurry to part with him.'

'Did you tell the officer of the watch I desired to speak to him?' exclaimed the captain angrily, on the marine again making his appearance.

'Yes, sir,' said the sentinel.

'Tell him to come to me instantly, or by the——'

His oath was cut short by the sentinel banging the door in a manner so very disrespectful that the bell was rung about a dozen times in one continued peal. It was about this time the officers were all seized below; and although one or two made a great exertion to raise their voices, and the captain decidedly must have heard the noise, little as it was, no alarm was created in his mind.

The boatswain's mate now descended, with the sentinel and three other men. The bell was ringing violently, and that prognosticated a stormy reception.

The door was opened, and the captain called out, 'Where is the officer of the watch? Put that sentry into the report; I'll teach him to bang my door in that manner. Where is the officer of the watch, I say?'

'Overboard,' said the boatswain's mate, with the utmost coolness, 'where you will be when we have tried you for your cruelty.'

The captain leaped into an upright position, but he was instantly seized; and in spite of his vociferations and his assertions, he was rudely pinioned like a felon, as he called out, 'I am your captain! Release me this instant, or you shall all swing, like dogs, to the foreyardarm.'

'We will take very good care you never witness against us. You might have slept until daylight, and had your last night's rest undisturbed, but that your rage and your noisy bell made us obey your summons.'

'I am your captain, you mutinous scoundrels,' cried Curlew, boiling with impotent rage. 'Unhand me! Unlash me, I say; or not one of you shall live a week after our arrival at Port Royal. I'll flog you all! Williams, you mutinous vagabond, unlash my hands, I say!'

'Don't make such a hullabaloo,' said one of the men. 'We are not going to give you

a swim yet; the weather's too hot for a bath. Damn me! but I'll pay you to-morrow for the four dozen you gave me yesterday.'

'Captain Curlew,' said the boatswain's mate, 'I wish to make you as comfortable as I can between this hour and your court-martial; and you are the man to choose between being gagged with a pump-bolt, or being left to breathe freely. Take your choice; if you speak again, the bolt you put into Williams's mouth the other day will go into yours.'

They say that many a man, who in perfect health when led to execution, has expressed his conviction that he could not die: he could not believe it possible. So Curlew, although pinioned, and in every way 'cabined, cribbed, confined,' could not believe that his word, which had six hours before been obeyed with readiness, should now be scoffed at and ridiculed. Again he mentioned that he was their captain, and called upon them by name to release him; and even then the boatswain's mate saw how much weight his order still had, by the wavering of one of his followers. He sent him for the pump-bolt and two stout yarns.

'You would keep your word, I know, if you were free,' said the boatswain's mate; 'and I'll keep mine, you may depend upon it. Gag him!'

Although Curlew was pinioned, few could imagine the resistance he made against the introduction of the bolt into his mouth. He kept his teeth firmly set together; and in spite of the painful operation of rubbing the iron to and fro against his gums, he resolutely remained determined to resist the indignity.

'Knock his teeth out, Williams! I can't stand here all night about such trifles.' Williams used the pointed part of the bolt, and forced the mouth open; the bolt was pulled back and tied behind his head, fixing it in the mouth like the bit in that of a horse, when the rider is as savage as the horse is restive.

'There!' said the boatswain's mate; 'you're quieted at last. Now go to sleep, or say your prayers, whichever you like best! Come along, lads! Sentry, this is your charge; and take care how you do your duty.'

There was no duty that could be more grateful to the marine; for there was no language he did not apply, and no annoyance to which he did not resort, or any indignity he did not commit. He spat in his face; and tried how his captain could stand pain, by applying the point of his bayonet occasionally to his bare flesh.

If words could have killed him, he would have died; for never did man suffer more. Not Suffolk, before his head was lopped off on the pinnace side by unmannerly hinds and pirates, ever felt more the force of words when uttered by one so lowly, so despicably born, than did Curlew, as the marine taunted him with his tyranny, and struck him in defiance, as he said, of the articles of war or the sentence of a court martial.

On deck the work of death had been busily carried on. All the officers but the master had been given, as one ruffian said, to feed their betters, the sharks; and those voracious devils are never far from a ship in those seas. The captain alone was reserved for further indignities, and for a protracted death.

The crew was now mustered on deck, and every man swore to be true to the cause; but when men engage in unlawful pursuits sleep never comes with its refreshing power, but is caught at intervals, and only becomes sound for the few minutes which excessive fatigue may force. The ringleader was afraid to close his eyes; and each man, excepting one or two who had found their way to the afterhold, and who had tumbled into a drunken sleep, felt that his throat was not safe if his eyes were closed.

So passed the night; and it is needless to picture the torture of mind endured by all. Curlew felt all the mortification of a nobleman subjected to the rude revenge of an ignorant, low-minded mob. The mutineers had no security that each man would not rise against his neighbour, prompted by the hope that thus he might obtain a pardon. Nothing but the determined revenge which animated them against the victim in the cabin, kept them together in spirit; for there are always some unsteady of purpose, who are troubled with thought and conscience, and who, having commenced an illegal act, flinch from its continuance.

At daylight there was a large ship on the weather quarter, under all sail, standing apparently in pursuit of them. The frigate immediately crowded all the canvas she could carry, whilst the ship astern, observing this disposition to escape, continued the chase. She was out of signal distance, and therefore, for the present, out of all power of molestation.

It was in daylight that the ship's company took the repose generally gained from the night; and it was eight o'clock before all hands were awake, and inclined to terminate the tragedy they had so successfully begun. In the meantime the frigate astern had gained considerably upon them. They now piped to breakfast, and sent the captain's steward, under the surveillance of one or two of the most resolute mutineers, to dress the captain in his full-dress uniform, ready to attend the court; and as the eye of the steward met those of his captain, he fully comprehended what his master required. They dressed him carefully, nay, even shaved him, and bestowed scrupulous attention upon his hair, but the bolt was never taken from

his mouth, and no sooner was his toilet completed than he was handcuffed, his useless sword was buckled to his side, and before the mutineers stood the man, powerless and disrespected, who a day before had never been approached but with awe and trembling.

When the ship's company had breakfasted they assembled on the quarter-deck; the awnings were spread, and some planks were placed, resting upon the carronade slides for seats. The scene resembled the preparations for the church service on board a ship. All hands sat down, and a chair was brought for the boatswain's mate near the capstan. On the drum-head were placed the cats, which had been so liberally used upon almost every man then present; and there was, throughout the whole ceremony, a marked attention and respect, very different from what might have been expected in a vessel in such a state, and which had not broken out into rebellion more than nine hours. Before the captain was brought on deck the ship's company was mustered, and only nine or ten were missing. These were all drunk below; but directly it was discovered the after-hold was battened down, and some of the most trustworthy were placed as sentinels about the decks.

The boatswain's mate, who had thus arrived at the very unenviable distinction of chief mutineer, had been formerly an attorney's clerk, and was a man who had a far better education than that which was generally reckoned as sufficient for fifty able seamen. Education does not always make people better, or more moral. Every disturbance on record, which had disgraced the navy, has always been set on foot, and generally carried into execution, by the best educated man on board. It is this education which teaches the ignorant that union is force, and which suggests to the ignorant the means of revenging an imagined wrong. It strips a dress of the respect believed due to it, and points the shaft of ridicule where respect concealed ignorance.

The boatswain's mate addressed his crew, for he was as absolute as a monarch, and had already got a chair for a throne. He told them, in a few words, that his design was to carry the ship to Puerto Caballo, to deliver her to the Spaniards, and to set up, with the price he expected to receive for this laudable action, as a Spanish grandee. He then drew an animated picture of liberty, and congratulated his slaves that they were free. One of the men ventured to remark, that the frigate astern evidently neared fast, and ventured to suggest that some means should be taken to avoid her if possible.

'Hold your tongue, you talking booby,' said the boatswain's mate, 'and mind your own business. I shall take such precautions as I think proper, and they will be sufficient to keep us clear of her or any one else; but I would recommend you to pay more respect to my opinion, and less to your own ability.'

'My lads,' he continued aloud, 'we are assembled here to try the Honourable William Curlew for conspiring against our liberties, and for having at various times been guilty of excessive tyranny. Shall I order the prisoner to be brought before you?'

A general acclamation of 'Yes' burst forth, and the master-at-arms and ship's corporal were sent down for him. When brought on deck he looked pale and haggard, the consequence of a night of struggle and of torture; but he soon recovered his looks, and his eye seemed brighter than ever.

'Take that bolt from his mouth,' said the boatswain's mate. It was done. 'William Curlew,' said the new chief, 'you are brought here to be tried for your life by these men, formerly your inferiors, now your equals.'

'Silence, you mutinous scoundrel!' said the captain. 'Hear me, you misguided, miserable wretches! The deed you have done shall as certainly be visited upon you with the utmost penalty of the law as that I stand here. Sooner or later the fore-yard-arm awaits you all. Up, I say, and take off your hats to your captain!' There was a slight movement among the men, who feared the lion even in his toils, and who could not shake off the respect due to one placed in proper authority over them. '*You*,' said the captain, addressing one in whom he observed this wavering, 'remember I call upon you to seize that fellow in that chair, and confine him in irons.'

'Take that fellow away,' shouted the boatswain's mate, pointing to the vacillating seaman; 'he's a fool. Now go on, William Curlew. Make any remark you like; and when you have satisfied yourself that your power is gone, your officers overboard, your ship captured, perhaps you will listen to me.'

'Release me of these handcuffs, you cowardly vagabonds, and you shall soon see that I do not fear a thousand such men, all guilty of a crime by which their lives are forfeited.'

'Proceed with the trial,' said the ringleader. Here several men were called, who enumerated many, many instances of oppression and tyranny, which had originated in Curlew's ignorance, both of the duties of a seaman and of an officer. It was evident he had never learnt to obey, and thus was unfit for command; and, as might have been supposed, every one found his captain guilty. 'Guilty,' said the boatswain's mate: 'a just sentence. "Vengeance is mine," said the Lord; we will transfer the power:' and this blasphemous allusion met with a smile from many. 'Guilty, William Curlew; your judges—not a packed set of fellows, with cocked hats, sitting round a table drawing caricatures whilst a sailor's life is in jeopardy;

but men who, twelve hours ago, would have obeyed you to the sacrifice of their lives—these Judges, I say, have found you guilty; and your sentence is——'

'Here's a ship on the weather bow, with a signal up,' exclaimed one of the mutineers.

All started in alarm but the boatswain's mate, who, taking a glass, made out the pendants of one of the Jamaica squadron. 'It is the *Surprise*,' he said.

Curlew now made a desperate attempt to liberate himself by promises. He declared that those who rallied round him should be pardoned; that rewards for returning to their duty should be given them. He called upon them, in the name of their king, their country, their allegiance, to release him of his handcuffs and obey his orders.

'Stand away there,' shouted the ringleader; 'keep him abaft the mizen-mast; he shall be where he has often placed others in disgrace. Go away, the rest of you. And now, Captain Curlew, I will revenge myself upon you, not by taking your life—I would not give a straw for that—but you yourself, your own rank, shall sacrifice you. You are the senior officer to that captain. Bring me the signal-book.'

The frigate's number was first made, which satisfied the *Surprise*, for they knew the frigate by sight; and when, as the *Surprise* bore up to send a boat on board of the senior officer's ship, the signal was hoisted by the boatswain's mate for the *Surprise* 'to continue her course, and of there being no occasion to communicate,' Curlew was brought to the gangway, and saw all his hopes vanish in air as the frigate, on observing the signal, hauled to the wind. Both ships hoisted their ensigns, and then hauled them down again.

'Look at her until your eyes ache. You once called me a stupid hound; this is not so badly done for one so badly educated!'

Double assurance followed the release from alarm, and double confidence was bestowed upon their new leader. His will was now the law; no murmur was likely to be raised against him. 'That work is done,' he said; 'now for the other. What shall his sentence be?'

Many proposed that he should be stripped and punished, and some, in their eagerness, rigged the gratings; others were for starting him with ropes' ends; others for lashing him to ring-bolts in the hot, scorching sun; but all were for death. The indignity was too great; the death was certain. He stood free; and seeing the preparations for a disgrace ten thousand-fold worse than death itself, Curlew leapt upon the taffrail, and, before he could be seized, threw himself overboard, and thus prevented another crime from being fastened on the memories of that wretched crew, who afterwards atoned for their crimes by the sacrifice of their lives.

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN WHICH CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IS BETTER THAN A POSITIVE WITNESS, AND A PRETTY WOMAN JUST AS ATTRACTIVE AS A FLAME BY NIGHT.

'I THINK, Mrs. Marsh,' said the attorney, 'that after I have told you that I am not come to execute a warrant against you, or to seize your furniture, or to hang your son, that you will leave off this hysterical nonsense, and answer me a few questions.'

'Lord, sir, you did frighten me so somehow, for you said you were a lawyer!'

'Well, madam, and so I am.'

'Don't say so, sir, pray don't! so nice a gentleman, and to have no hope of everlasting life! It is quite grievous to think how any person can go into a profession which is, begging your pardon, sir, d—d beforehand.'

'I really, my good lady, do not understand you!'

'Oh, it's too plain to be misunderstood. "Woe unto thee, ye lawyers," it's written in the Book of Life, and it must be true!'

The attorney smiled; and seeing that he had to deal with an ignorant fanatic, assured her that those words only applied to barristers who were paid for lying, and for making the worse the better cause, thus making the rascal triumph over the honest man, and not to attorneys, who honestly perform their duties, and who had no more to do with the bar than they had with the bench. Mrs. Marsh bowed her head, and thanked God fervently that her visitor had a chance of salvation, and immediately discontinued all approaches to hysterics, and became as reasonable as could be expected.

'I come to ask you,' continued the attorney, 'about your poor daughter, who, I believe, never recovered the loss of her master's child.'

Mrs. Marsh started at the question. 'It is now many years, certainly twenty, since that affair happened, and never has my child been reasonable since.'

'Can you tell me anything of the particulars? for, to tell you the truth, I think I have discovered this child.'

The old lady gave a very pious ejaculation, which merged something between a prayer and a blessing. 'If it is discovered—oh my! what joy will come upon the poor old couple! You know, sir, it is written, "Hope deferred maketh——"'

'Yes, madam, I know all that by heart, so do not waste our time with quotations.'

'I've got the date down in my Bible; and this is all Betsy ever told us of it. It was a warm morning, and she placed the child on a seat in the shade, whilst she, contrary to her master's orders, went to pick a nosegay, which she thought would be grateful to her mistress. But you know, sir, it is written, "We must not do evil that good

may come of it;" and when she had got the flowers together, she went back to the seat, and she saw a man galloping away with the child on a white horse; and before she could alarm either her master or mistress, the man was out of sight.'

The attorney remembered well that Hanson had stated in his last will, that the maid was making love to a man over a hedge, and therefore knew how much of Betsy's nosegay, and of the man and the grey horse, deserved credit.

'Pray, madam, did your daughter *always* tell the truth?'

The old lady was silent; the thought of her daughter's shame seemed to follow the question—and she always doubted the story herself.

'Did she never vary about this story? Did she never mention that Tom such-a-one was by, and she called him?'

'Yes, poor soul, she often wanders about it. Now and then she says, "Ah! William! it was owing to you I lost the child!"'

'Could I see her?' said the attorney.

'She is in the County Lunatic Asylum, and has been ever since the event.'

'Now, madam, what became of those Harrisons?'

'Lord, sir, is it not written, "A house divided against a house cannot but fall;" the prop of the house was the child, the foundation, sir, was on sand, "and the storms blew and the winds arose——"'

'Yes, yes, my good woman, "and great was the fall thereof," no doubt in the world; but what became of them?'

'For five years they continued close here in the same cottage; but, "the Lord tempered the breeze to the shorn lamb," and they lived to become thankful for His mercy. At last they sold the cottage and went into Devonshire, and there they live now.'

'Do you know whereabouts?'

'Not far from Exeter, I hear; but time has gone fast—and when they removed, the affair was partially forgotten; but I cannot forget it—for my daughter's ruin, and her madness, remain for ever on the mind of her mother.'

The attorney condoled with the parent. It was evident from the word 'ruin,' that Hanson's acount of the transaction was correct, and that the girl had endeavoured to screen herself under the falsehood of the nosegay.

'Is your daughter sane enough to speak of the child?'

'Sometimes, sir. Sometimes she'll talk by the hour of poor master Thomas; but then she flies off, and William is talked off. He offered to marry her afterwards; but who could let a madwoman marry?'

The conversation finished by the mother agreeing to see the daughter in the presence of the attorney. And in that interview the legal gentleman was quite satisfied he was on the right scent, and that he might return to London and report his proceedings; he gave a scriptural blessing in the house of the old lady, and this cheap gratification was to her the greatest remuneration she could desire. She trusted that the seeds of righteousness had not fallen upon barren ground, and took the ban off the lawyer in spite of the words.

On his return to London he waited upon the German doctor, who, whilst he related his adventure, was busy mimicking him to the life, in order to create a roar of laughter at the first dinner-table he might frequent where the attorney was known. On comparing notes, they agreed to go to Exeter together, and, whatever it might cost, find out the family, and trace this sailor through the means of Susan. Her abode had been discovered by the German doctor, who had met Cornish at dinner in London, and who very kindly mentioned her beauty, omitting, for once, the general detraction which accompanied his knowledge of any lady, whether married or single.

There was a gleam of satisfaction upon the laughter-loving face of the doctor as he spoke of the joy the parents would experience if they could ascertain that this stolen child was alive, and that they could, without doubt, establish his identity with the one lost by this careless nursery-maid.

It was not long before they started, two of the black graces, Physic and Law, both sufficiently noisome doses to counteract each other, in a gig, to drive down by easy stages to Exeter, to see the country at their leisure, and to relax a little from the continual bore of professional business. But no two men ever travel together without some slight difference of opinion; and the first arose from the perfect conviction on the mind of the doctor that he could drive better than his companion—a conviction not quite so strong in the mind of the attorney, and, apparently, a matter of no concern to the horse, who, being a very self-willed creature, did not care who held the reins, as he was not likely to mind any hint as to which way he ought to go. At starting, it seemed to know the road, and how to avoid anything it might meet; but it swung its head about in a most independent style, and was quite insensible to any pulls or tugs, manifesting, however, a great disposition to resent any injury which might be inflicted upon it by the whip; and on one occasion it was about, as the lawyer said, to give legal notice to quit.

'Never mind!' said the German, 'there's a great similarity between a man and a horse—they both go a quick pace at first; but as they get tired of the journey, they gradually slacken their friskiness, and tug on, the one through life, and the other through his daily

task, quite content with saving themselves as much as possible.'

'Very pretty philosophy; but I'll trouble you to mind this donkey—for I have observed the horse has a strange dislike to those patient animals, and always shies at their approach.'

The attorney became very nervous as they neared the neddy; and the face was much too good for the doctor to lose. He had got his eyes fixed on his companion, and his face so similar, that no one passing by could have recognised one from the other: mimicry was much more pleasant than carefulness. The attorney was right; the horse would shy. He caught hold of the reins to keep the gig clear of a wheelbarrow; the nervous twitch was irresistible; and the law and the physic were both nearly ejected without much notice, hardly being, as the attorney remarked, tenants-at-will. This brought on a dispute about who was the best coachman, until the attorney, looking his friend suddenly in the face, could not refrain from bursting out into a roar of laughter as he saw his own face exactly. It was impossible, if he had ever looked in a glass, that he could have completely forgotten his features. And now he certainly did not require a glass.

At the different places at which they stopped, the doctor invariably caused some ridicule to be attached to a neighbour who could not comprehend why he should be the object of laughter. And on the finish of the second day's journey, after seeing their obstinate horse better taken care of than it deserved, they went to the coffee-room and ordered a dinner. It was at one of those moderate inns where carriage company are seldom seen; but, like most English inns, clean and comfortable.

Of all horrible contrivances, the separations in a coffee-room are the worst. They give a kind of melancholy air to the room; and from their sombre appearance, seem to indicate to those who occupy them, that their voices ought not to be heard beyond the green curtain which tops the divisions. In one of these boxes sat the doctor, and the attorney. The attorney was a great worshipper of the jolly god; but the fiery port defied even him. The doctor, on the contrary, was a man more in search of objects which he could turn into ridicule; and his sharp eyes were ever on the alert for some fun. Opposite to them sat a coarse-looking man, of about forty, with a girl evidently on good terms with herself, and most solicitous to attract attention. She was not long before she attracted the doctor; and, by way of beginning an acquaintance, the doctor jammed his hat on his head and screwed up his countenance to the exact resemblance of the man opposite her. So well was this done, that the waiter asked him if he would take his dinner where he was, or with the lady opposite.

This invitation alarmed the right gentleman, who called out, 'What the devil do you mean by that?' The frightened waiter turned short round and found the right man in the right box; and when he changed his position in order to ascertain the likeness, the doctor had taken off his hat, and made himself up into a most sentimental-looking gentleman, anxious for a glass of water and a tooth-pick. This had not escaped the eyes of the lady, who, being on the look-out for admirers, had been rather struck with the doctor's versatility of talent.

Whilst the doctor and his friend joked over the hot port, the elderly-looking, rough man was talking loud of former days—of battles by flood and field, and of his acquaintance with every governor of every island in the West Indies. He at last got to Martinique. And he was beginning a description of the capture of that island with 'You must know——'

'I should think I must, Mr. Watson, or I must be a much more stupid person than I am inclined to believe myself. All the time you were making love to me, you told me of this extraordinary swim with the sword in your mouth—the observations of Sir John Jervis—your promotion—and heaven only knows what besides! And now you tell me "you must know."—Ever since our marriage, which is now one whole week, I do not think you have ever once thought of my appearance, but talked incessantly about your own affairs. You would have done capitally to have amused Rosa Talbot, or Susan Monckton!'

The doctor started at hearing the name of the very person of whom they were in pursuit. And as he was a man who turned every opportunity to his own advantage, fearless of offending, since that was never his intention, and willing to please, that being his peculiar talent, he entered into conversation with the captor of Martinique, and soon led him into an animated description of that battle; whilst Mrs. Watson indulged in yawns, which opened her mouth sufficiently wide to rival that of an alligator catching flies.

'A sailor, by Jove!' said the doctor; 'this *is* fortunate. I love your profession, sir—I honour the wooden walls of old England; and, although a German by birth, a man who can do credit to those who protect their country, and maintain the honour of its flag. I presume you are an admiral!'

The lady was instantly in love with the doctor to take her husband for an admiral. She never admired him so much before!

There is no man who, having been taken for a superior officer, likes to dwindle down to the painful reality of inferiority. The mistake convinces him that in justice he ought

to have held the higher rank; and he only lets himself down a peg, in the hopes that the next step will be ceded to him without any interrogation. Watson answered with a peculiar smile—'Not *quite* an admiral yet! although one day I might get the bunting at the mast-head!' Meaning that he might yet be an admiral.

'And do you know Miss Monckton, madam?' said the solicitor, joining in. 'I remember a girl of that name who, when young, promised to be a great beauty. She was the daughter of a clergyman of St. Giles's.'

'She's the same,' answered Mrs. Watson, with a very independent toss of the head, such as a horse often gives when he is encumbered with the funeral feathers; 'and whatever she might have promised, she took care never to perform: a plainer girl can hardly be found in Devonshire. And as for her being a parson's daughter, the more shame for her, as *I* know——'

'Whew!' whistled the doctor; 'what's in the wind now?'

'Nothing,' said Watson, 'but what is common enough in life—a little revenge from an insulted female.'

'A *what*, Mr. Watson!—a female. What's that, I should like to know?'

'Why a woman, to be sure!'

'A woman? Why, that's worse! Oh, you barbarian!—you pitch-and-tar sailor!—you uncouth, unlicked cub!'

'Avaust heaving, Mrs. Watson! I made you a lady when you were only a lady's-maid.'

'Oh, the barbarous ruffian!'

'And mark my words, I'll teach you better manners than you were ever taught before. So if ever you get your kitchen lingo adrift again, I'll give you such a precious starting, that you'll carry the quarter-deck dictionary in your head ever afterwards. Mind that, my lady! and don't think you can command a man who, at the taking of Martinique, under the very eye of the great Admiral Sir John Jervis, now Earl St. Vincent, &c., &c.——'

'A great victory, sir,' said the attorney, 'which you have had the kindness to relate to us.'

'I'll gain a greater, sir!' said Watson, who was now getting half-seas-over. 'Any man may swim to a battery and take it; but show me the man who can quiet a woman's tongue—a *female's* lip!'

Mrs. Watson looked unutterable disdain; but she did not dare say a word. Watson was the captain of his own ship, that was evident. And however lazy he might have been with his brig, he had practised some excellent discipline since his marriage, and had every prospect for the future, if not of a happy, at least, of a quiet life. 'Come, toddle away to bed with you; don't you see I've stuck the fork in the table?'—(This was formerly a signal for all youngsters to go to bed.)—'Come, be off! When you were a lady's-maid, you were obliged to sit up for your mistress; but you won't comb my hair, be assured, although I'll curl yours—brush!'

Mrs. Watson, with apparent meekness in her countenance, but a devil in her eye, got up directly. She gave the doctor a very intelligible look, and retired.

Watson soon got uproarious; the quiet solicitor retired when he volunteered some cockpit songs; and the doctor kindly assisted him to bed.

In the night there was a great disturbance in the inn; the chambermaid was drowsy enough to set fire to some curtains. The alarm brought numbers to the assistance of the master of the house. And the waiter distinctly told the innkeeper that he was under the greatest obligation to Mr. Watson; for he saw him come out of his room, and no one could mistake his face; that he was the most active in extinguishing the flames, although so lightly dressed as to incur the greatest danger. And that it was owing to him the fire did so little damage.

'I can't exactly understand this,' said the landlord; 'willing enough as I am to thank every gentleman for his assistance. But Mr. Watson, as you call him, went to bed drunk, and he is now asleep in the other gentleman's room. And how a man can get drunk one moment, and get sober the next, and then drunk again, without any assistance, I don't know.'

'That's the gentleman, I'll swear!' said the waiter, 'who came out of the lady's room, although he appeared quite sober then; for there's no one else in the house like him. And this,' said the waiter, pointing to the doctor, 'is the only person who was not present.'

'I do sleep so very soundly,' said the doctor. 'The trumpeter of a regiment slept next room to me when I was a young man, and, although he practised all night, he never used to wake me.'

Many people doubt circumstantial evidence, but believe everything which a man swears to positively. There are some cases in which by accident a man may be mistaken.

CHAPTER XLV.

IN WHICH TWO PEOPLE GAIN A POINT, AND A WISE MAN RAILS AGAINST SOLICITUDE.

It was early the next morning, and before Mr. Watson had recovered his senses, that the doctor, the attorney, and the now quieted horse, were jolting along on their journey. Mrs. Watson was all smiles and kindness. She had quite forgotten the last night's words

and deeds, and was all meekness and affection. Watson swore he never would get drunk again, and excused himself for his last night's language in a declaration that he was so excited by the relation of the Martinique victory, and so pleased with the doctor's company, that he had forgotten the naval discipline, and been drunk at quarters.

'They are gone, I believe,' said the modest Mrs. Watson. 'They are going the same road as we are, and sleep at Exeter to-night. I hope we shall be able to get as far, for there is nothing that keeps up a person's respectability so much as good company; and he is one of the first London physicians, going down to see a sick patient.'

'He takes his time about it, then,' said Watson; 'he never should attend on me. But how came you to know who they are, and where they are going?'

'Why, because they said so before you went to bed; and you ought to remember that, for it was just before you sent for the bowl of punch.'

'I must have been considerably in the wind last night, for how I came to be so active about this fire, and made afterwards a wrong board into another man's bedroom, I don't know; but I am quite certain of one thing, I don't recollect anything about it. Come, let us pipe to breakfast, and we'll get under weigh afterwards.'

Mrs. Watson had a most particular wish to be revenged upon Miss Susan, as to her she attributed the loss of her place; but to her likewise she might have attributed her marriage with so distinguished a naval officer.

'If,' she thought to herself, 'there is only a county ball, I will stand one above her in spite of her; and if that will not break her heart, I know nothing of our sex. Oh, the delight of showing her my superiority, of dancing next to her, and of having the *right* to be above her! Talk of the pleasure of virtue, indeed! Give me the keen delight of revenge! And as for that poor, sick, miserable, consumptive Miss Talbot, she can never see me in my proper place, for she must have been dead this four years.'

Mr. Watson had made a precious selection of a wife; but marriage is, we are told, a lottery. Some young ladies call it destiny—fate—and everything else but the proper name. He believed his Betsy Weller a hard-working, industrious, clever, honest, virtuous woman. Who does not fancy the woman of his heart a phœnix before he marries? And how slowly are those bright illusions stripped off! But although only married a week, Watson was sufficiently clever to see that supremacy was the first object, even in a lady's-maid;—that from the instant he married he had to struggle for his lawful right. The struggle was very short. He cut the cat's head off the first evening, as the Persian story relates the manner of obtaining sovereignty; and in so doing, and establishing his right, he made his wife his bitterest enemy. She for ever railed at him, indirectly; talked of his age, the disparity of years; wondered what a young woman could do with an old man; and had as many quotations about the different stages of life as a play actor: and when she gave him the benefit of her reading, he found it a hundredfold easier to command a brig with sixty men, and keep all in good order and discipline, than one woman. But he conquered her.

The doctor was knowing enough to go to another hotel than that he had named to Mrs. Watson. He was very apprehensive of another fire in the house, so that at Exeter neither parties met. Watson intended to take a respectable cottage at Stonehouse, there to live luxuriantly upon ninety pounds a year, in the vicinity of a dock-yard and within hail of a ship; and pushed on to gain what he believed the summit of human happiness. He looked forward to many a night's joviality with old shipmates. His world was on the waters. All of his youth's best recollections was associated with scenes afloat, the actors in which now commanded ships, or, like himself, had sunk into oblivion at Plymouth Dock. With those companions he could tell his anecdotes of West India gratifications, and there he could lie down and die contentedly. His wife had no objection to this plan. She wished to remove from all who had ever known her, and to start as a lady by birth, education, and manners. Watson followed up his plan; took a cottage at Stonehouse, in which we leave him for the present, he having quite enough on his hands to tame his shrew, and to conquer his own bad propensity to drink.

Mrs. Talbot gave her unexpected visitors a warm welcome; and great was the doctor's surprise and gratification to find in Tom Bowling, now a captain in the navy, the same urchin who defied his authority, broke from his schoolmaster, and who had fought his way to his rank. Nor was he less gratified to find poor Susan, the forlorn girl who had struggled against poverty and the world's relentless persecutions, the wife of so estimable a character. Thus, so far, their cruise had prospered.

The doctor, who assumed the right of an old friend, told Susan the object of their visit. 'You are found,' he said, 'and he is found: there can be no doubt that he is one and the same person with the dog-stealer's son. But we are now in search of his father.'

'His father,' replied Susan, 'you know, is long since dead.'

'If I thought so,' observed the doctor, drily, 'I would have searched the tombstones, and not the records of such living beauties as yourself. Bowling, as you call

him, is no more the son of that Hanson than I am. He was stolen from a house by the dog-stealer, and we have every reason to believe that he is the son of one Mr. Harrison, who lives near this village.

'I have never heard of the name, but if he is here under that or any other, our good-natured rector will soon find him out; but, oh, doctor! what pleasure has your visit not caused me. Captain Bowling has ever told me that he felt confident, from words which fell from this dog-stealer's wife, that he was not their son. It was the only thing in existence to which he could not reconcile himself; and although he spoke kindly even of them, he ever felt he was born above them. This pleasure, then, I shall be the first to communicate. I, his wife—one that from the earliest infancy he has loved—I thank God have now the means of giving him the brightest intelligence he ever received. The rector dines here to-day; he is—for there is no secret which time will not divulge, even if a woman's lips are by a miracle sealed—engaged to be married to Mrs. Talbot. Tell him plainly the object of your visit, and I have mistaken that good man if he would not delay even his own marriage to do the Samaritan act of restoring a lost son to his parents. But, doctor, remember that I am particularly concerned in this discovery: it will give to me a new father and a new mother, and my heart swells with impatience to form again those ties and affections which have once snapped so rudely, so suddenly. You can have horses, carriages, and servants. Here all is at your service; and I know I only deprive Mrs. Talbot of a pleasure in being the first to make the offer of them.'

'Does everyone who lives in the country become thus hospitable—thus eager to do good acts?'

'Virtue and honesty, doctor,' said Susan with a smile, 'live where nature is brightest and fairest; and where civilization is not, hospitality is the greatest. Call us what you like—country clowns, clods, bumpkins, or louts—but you cannot call us unmindful of the first act which even Mahomet imposed on his followers.'

'Well *said*, my little Turk,' remarked the rector, as he came in, the very features of his face appearing to have been chiselled by the hand of benevolence and good humour. He was made acquainted with the doctor and his object; and as the reverend gentleman, in the intensity of his attention, assumed an expression of countenance of mingled wonder, pleasure and gravity, the mimic could not resist his peculiar fancy, and twisted his face into so complete a resemblance, that Susan burst out into a fit of laughter.

'Well, you whimsical creature,' said the rector, 'what do you see so very ridiculous in either of us that you must laugh?'

'It was merely a droll remembrance connected with former times which flashed across me,' she replied; then turning to the mimic, added, 'ah, doctor, you are just as bad now as you were twenty years ago.'

'I'm so pleased with the face,' said the doctor, 'that I think I shall wear it instead of my own;' and he whispered in her ear, 'I want a wife!—what would the widow think?'

'I flatter myself,' said the rector, 'I can read countenances as well as any man, and from your eagerness, sir, to undertake this difficult task of discovering the family, your features declare you the honest-hearted, good-tempered man I know I shall find you; but, to tell you the truth, I think your face is very much altered since I came in.'

'I hope you don't take me for a double-faced man, at any rate; my pretty advocate here will give me a better character than that.'

'Indeed I will not,' said Susan, laughing; 'for heaven's sake get your own face back. Mrs. Talbot will take you to be either the rector or his twin-brother. I never saw anything half so ridiculous in my life.'

'I must go,' said the worthy divine, 'and get some information about these Harrisons. Good-morning, sir; we meet at dinner. But I cannot help asking my little friend, Susan, if'—said the rector, hesitating—'if I have not the honour to resemble you somewhat in the face?'

'No, no,' said Susan, '*he* resembles *you*—that's all the difference.'

Johnson says that unexpected visitors in the country are like provisions thrown into a half-starved garrison. This importation of London men was likely to keep the old house in merriment for some time. The doctor was so pleased at finding his former friend's daughter respectable in life, happy, and handsome, that he was in excellent spirits, and amused himself in deceiving Susan, who gave him sixpence, believing him to be an old gentleman in distress, and the next minute desired the servant to see who that young man was who was walking across the lawn.

Whilst thus one branch of the household were amused, the sober-minded solicitor was gaining the confidence of Mrs. Talbot. He also related the object of their trip, and soon enlisted Mrs. Talbot warmly in the cause. She felt for Susan; and no mother ever embraced a daughter more tenderly than she did the companion of her deceased daughter when she ascertained that her husband's birth was respectable, and that all the clouds of his youth were likely to clear away, and show a bright horizon. The attorney was eager to finish his work, and to return to the smoke of the metropolis, for his life was made pleasant from constant employment and constant novelty, and it was in London only that he

had the excitement he desired ; but eager as he was, he could not convert the doctor to his wishes. The latter was a man who enjoyed pleasure, and who made his profession a recreation. He had amassed a considerable fortune, partly by lucky windfalls, partly by prudence, but mostly by exertion. Now he no longer toiled like a galley-slave. He was withdrawing by degrees from practice ; and having taken a fancy to Mrs. Talbot's house, was not in a hurry to leave it, excepting as far as the search after Harrison was concerned.

About five miles from Mrs. Talbot's there was a lone sequestered spot, which stood about a mile from the high-road, and on this spot stood a neat cottage ; but so little was it known, that even the rector had never heard of it until he set his myrmidons to work to ferret out the parents of Bowling. His clerk, however, found out that persons of the name of Harrison lived there, that they had so completely retired from the world, that none ever saw them but at about eight in the morning and at sunset. They had but one servant ; and although the butcher and the baker went regularly three times a-week, they never had seen the faces of their customers. The servant paid them as they brought their goods, and the door was shut without any further notice on either side.

It appeared that for a month every year they regularly left the cottage. None saw them go ; none saw them return. The cessation and recurrence of orders to the baker and butcher alone gave intimation of their flight or return. In the front of this cottage was a little garden remarkable for its neatness and order. Few knew how much of these qualities it owed to the master's eye and hand.

When the rector heard of the residence of these people, he immediately ordered his black cob to be saddled ; and the stout, sturdy little animal seemed, although getting old, to carry his master with the firmness of step which has made the words familiar—'It feels strong under me.'

'I have,' thought the rector, as he rode along, 'a pleasant and a difficult task to perform ; but my profession, thank God, supplies me with an introduction. The rector leaves his card where it would be presumptuous in another so to do. The rector's duty is to know all his parishioners ; for if of his faith, or of another, the hand of charity should be open to all, and the deserving and industrious cherished and supported. It is the rector's duty to know the character of every man.'

These arguments cheered up the good soul as he trotted along the narrow lanes, and he was kept in constant employment clearing his eyes and his ears of the flies, gnats, and other insinuating devils who live to annoy men of bright eyes wherever they go. At last he got to the cottage, and pulled up his gallant steed to survey the premises. A good general always surveys the field carefully before coming to action.

The cottage was evidently possessed by those who had money at command, for it was a picture of neatness. The woodbine wound carelessly about the trellis-work, which shut out the only opening to the road, and the whole place seemed covered with roses, which, at that season, were in full blossom. It looked the most delightful retreat from a world of care and woe that could be met with ; but the rector was not a man partial to such retreats.

'Oh, solitude, where are thy charms !' said he, as he looked at the scene before him. 'What hands are to pluck these flowers? or are they to bud, blossom, and fade, scarcely regarded? To what use is this beautiful view if only melancholy eyes gaze upon it, and it has not power to cheer them? How sweetly would the voice of the young girl sound through those shrubberies, where now all is silent but the chirrup of the bird. I would rather hear the cracked voice of a London crier, than catch no sound but the echo of my footfall, and live in one eternal silence as in the tomb. What is it, after all, if a man leads the life of seclusion, but a handsome grave? It is in society that men live, and breathe, and have their being ; and sorrow only grows more intense the more it is nurtured in seclusion. I'll use the privilege of my calling—a clergyman cannot offend when his purpose is charity.'

He alighted from his cob, and passing the bridle round a small post, which seemed uselessly placed to keep the gate open, he approached the entrance, which was almost entirely concealed by the roses. There was a bell, which, when pulled, seemed to ring louder than that of a cathedral ; the air within had not been disturbed by noise, and the sound was consequently the louder. For some time the summons remained unheeded, until at last a door was heard to shut, and a footstep approached.

The door was locked ; and, when opened, an elderly woman appeared. She seemed astonished at the sight of a human creature, and gazed with surprise at the gentleman before her.

'My good woman,' began the clergyman (and he was irresistible, for his voice was as sweet as his features were benevolent), 'I must herald my visit by informing you that I am the rector of the parish ; and I own I am not a little to blame in having allowed such a time to pass before I paid my respects to the owner of this beautiful cottage.'

'My master and mistress, sir,' said the old maid, 'never receive any visits, especially at this season of the year, and more especially in this week.'

'May I ask why this season, which is the

most delightful of all,—when God shines brightest in His works,—when all nature is alive in beauty, and age itself looks fairer from the charms around her,—is chosen for seclusion?'

'It is connected with a sorrowful event, which my master has never forgotten. I should offend him if I were to admit you.'

'Take this card, and tell him that his days of grief are over, that the storm of affliction will subside, and a clearer and brighter day beam upon him; tell him I, the rector of the parish, desire an interview, and that my holy calling is the guarantee of his security.'

'They are at prayers, sir.'

'And who so proper to direct their prayers as their spiritual pastor? Go!'

CHAPTER XLVI.

IN WHICH IT IS SHOWN THAT SORROW MAY LINGER OUT THE NIGHT, BUT JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING.

'I AM honoured by the attention which has led to this visit,' said Mr. Harrison, as the rector entered the room; 'but I had hoped that the few days I have yet to live might not have been disturbed by any.' Then, pointing to an elderly female in the room, he added, 'That is my wife, sir.'

The divine was a man of the world, and knew well that if he plumped out his story at once, those so buried in grief would either go mad from excess of joy, or, totally discrediting the truth, would obstinately shut their senses against conviction. He chose, therefore, to pursue their path for the present, watching for the first turning to direct them to better prospects.

'I should not, sir, have ventured to disturb your solitude had not my duty rendered it imperative. It was but yesterday I learnt your abode, and I hasten to pay that visit of respect which my inclination, as well as my duty, prompts.'

Mr. Harrison bowed a sort of civil acknowledgment of the compliment, but he was evidently ill at ease; and in spite of the rector's countenance, which never had failed him, he began to think that he must come to the point. He, however, tried again.

'It is some years, Mr. Harrison, since you came here, I believe?'

'Too many, sir; too many! "Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet." I linger on with now my only consolations, my wife and my Bible, waiting for the day which seems never to approach.'

'It is a great blessing to be so prepared for so awful an event, but our lives were given us for something better than to be darkened by the constant presence of death.'

'All is taken from me—all—all! Years have passed—twenty-two years next Friday—since I was left a childless man; and though time, with many, heals the wounds of the afflicted, in this instance time but makes the affliction sharper, since the prop is destroyed which would have supported my age. Look there, sir! There is my wife, who ever since the sad event has scarcely raised her eyes. She knows you are present, but she is ignorant of our discourse.'

'And yet, sir, there is always hope. The veriest wretch who wends his way to the gallows has hope until the bolt is removed. Nay, not far from here I performed the marriage ceremony for a young lady who was dying of consumption, and who was so buoyed up by hope that she never credited even the physician or myself. If your child died, then it became your duty to reconcile yourself to the will of Him above; if otherwise, he yet may live, and yet be restored to you.'

Harrison fixed his eyes upon the rector. A flash of imagination had brightened his features; but it quietly relaxed into the same sorrowful countenance, and the head, merely by its motion, seemed to say, 'No, no.'

'Pardon me, Mr. Harrison, for thus intruding on your sorrows, but I have known many receive great relief from the repetition of their misfortunes. Sometimes a flood of tears relieves the oppression of the heart; and as the cloud thus pours out its waters of sorrow, the bright sun of hope gives a gleam of future happiness. I have already, from your mouth, learnt the cause of your grief; give that grief vent, and let me share in it by hearing it.' The rector had taken Mr. Harrison's hand, and the kindness of his manner had completely charmed him.

'I will tell you, sir,' he replied, though with some difficulty, 'that you are the only one to whom I have ever unburthened my mind.' Harrison then related the story much as Mrs. Marsh had related it to the attorney; for both had got it from the same source, and both were evidently deceived. 'Now, sir, listen and see how a brother's love may be repaid by ingratitude. I am the son, and the next heir to a property of great extent. Nay, sir, there is that worldly bauble, a title, for which men often in this world pawn their eternal happiness—for the gratification of being called a lord. Poor, ignorant fools! How I pity them! Is a lord encased in other flesh than ourselves? And what I feel now as a commoner, shall I not feel as a peer? Does the title exempt us from the common lot of human nature? Can a title cure the sharp pangs of disease? Can it lighten the oppression of the heart? Can it make a man stronger to resist evil, or firmer to do good? Can it surmount the witherings of age, or hold up a shield against the dart of death? My brother was discontented at my marriage. He tried to thwart me in my inclinations when I first learnt to love. He is a soldier,

a man of ambition ; one who looks with unbounded satisfaction on a star, and sees not in that order the sacrifice of human life which has obtained it. The proud man is made prouder from a ribbon! And what is it for? How is it earned? The man who wears it directed others, who well executed his orders ; and when he dies, the baubles are placed upon his coffin, and the spectators say, "There *was* a great man!" My brother was under many obligations to me, and I cherished him as became my duty ; but when my first child, and he a *boy*, was born, an estrangement took place, which arose, as he says, from a mere difference of opinion. He withdrew himself from my house, and used the very horse—for it was coal black, as dark as the deed he did—that I had given him. At that time, as I told you, my house was by the roadside ; the servant had seen the horse and the rider a thousand times ; and she will swear it was he who stole my child, and waved his handkerchief as if in defiance. Am I wrong in shutting myself from an ungrateful world which I despise, when even my own brother's hand is raised against me—when he is the robber of my house to serve his own ambition?'

'If even all this were true, which it is not, you still are wrong. Of course you have endeavoured to find this child?'

'Money has been lavished ; cities, towns, counties, settlements abroad, the colonies, have been ransacked, but he has never been heard of. One word to you is sufficient: my brother is married, and in his family the title and estate descend.'

'Has your brother denied this charge?'

'At first, with all the warmth of honour, he repudiated the charge with scorn ; he then has tried to lull me by affection ; he pretends to have joined in the search ; but he never has denied that on that morning, at that hour, he rode by the house, and waved his handkerchief to one he believed to be my wife.'

'And supposing now, Mr. Harrison, that you were to find that you had been mistaken in the child-stealer ; that your boy still lives ; that conviction, clear as that sun which shines above us, should point out the youth ; what reparation could you make to this brother whom you have stigmatized—nay, cursed, discountenanced, disowned, and dishonoured?'

'I should pray to God to grant me one sight of this boy, and then crush me with His thunders.'

'Rather pray that your brother's good feeling might volunteer forgiveness, and with outstretched arms run to clasp you to his bosom, to share in your happiness, to lead you back to society, to bless you whilst living, and mourn for you when dead. You spoke of him as ambitious, and despised the rewards which his sovereign has given for his services. Read the account in this paper, which I have in my pocket, of a brilliant service performed at sea.'

'I have done with this world, sir, and I read but that book.'

'You will read that book with double zest when you have read this, and I take my leave of you. Oblige me. It is perhaps a curious request from a clergyman ; but it comes from one who will cheer the lone pilgrim, and show him that he has yet in store the two greatest blessings in existence —forgiveness for sins, and the end of the long night of darkness.'

Harrison took the paper. At first he seemed to skim it carelessly, but as he went on he became more interested ; and when he came to the capture of the frigate, he said, 'I could live in the world to feel half the joy the father of that man must feel, as he reads this glowing account of his son's valour and prudence from the pen of another.'

'Then return to the world ; open these doors ; leave this seclusion ; rejoice loudly ; and be grateful to Heaven! Your brother is restored to you, freed from all suspicion; your son lives in the person of the individual of whom you have been reading!' Harrison clasped his hands together, and muttering, 'My God! my God!' fell senseless at the feet of the rector. Nor was that excellent man unmoved by the scene: he sank into his chair, and, covering his face in his hands, burst into a flood of tears. The wife, startled at her husband's fall, seemed to have imagined some injury had been inflicted upon him ; and she seized the rector by the collar, and held him firmly in her grasp. She more resembled the maniac than the woman ; and being deaf, could not understand the rector, whose anxiety to make her a participator in the news, brought in the old maid. If anything could have changed the rector's burst of grief to one of laughter, it would have been the absurd position in which he found himself placed ; for the maid, as maids always think it requisite to do, on her appearance, made more noise than half a score of dogs baying the moon.

Harrison soon recovered ; and as the returning life brought with it a return of memory, he seized the rector's hand and said, 'It was this good purpose brought you here?'

'I never consent to be the harbinger of sorrow,' said the clergyman, smiling. 'I had a good work to perform, and I have done it to my own satisfaction.'

When Harrison, by signs and bawling, made his wife understand the purport of the late discourse, she waved her hand to and fro, as much as to say, 'Impossible!' and gave the rector to understand that she was as sceptical as St. Thomas of old, and that without she saw the marks upon his shoulders, and felt with her own hands the mole she

well remembered, she never would believe in an event to which all miracles were insignificant; and that she required proofs stronger than assertions, for her brother-in-law, she was certain, never would take a child away to rear it up as a barrier against his heart's fondest wishes.

The rector left the task of communicating how the clear evidence was brought about to the husband, and he was soon satisfied that the groves and the shrubberies must have occasionally louder notes reverberating through them than any produced by the whistle of the blackbird; for if the lady was deaf she was by no means dumb, and, being hard of hearing herself, imagined the whole world suffered under the same painful affliction, and her sharp notes penetrated the brain.

'But I have another piece of news for you before I depart. You lost only one child; you will find two.'

Mr. Harrison had long given up everything like a joke, and was very dull of comprehension; but the rector, as he saw smiling faces now around him, mentioned Bowling's marriage, the loveliness of Susan, her long-tried constancy, her affection, and spoke of her in such raptures that a husband accustomed to be absent might well be jealous in overhearing. 'Now I must return,' he added: 'I have to make her glad by giving an account of you.'

'Return you will not, I assure you, until you have done me one kinder office. Teach me, sir, to offer up a prayer, in all the sincerity of my heart, which shall convey to Him my fervent gratitude; and in that thanksgiving pour forth an earnest desire that I may be so strengthened in love to the great Giver of this unexpected blessing, that in my love for my restored son I may not forget Him who has thus sheltered him from the storms of life, and conducted him to his long-expectant father.'

Never did the rector perform the grateful task with half the eloquence with which he seemed suddenly inspired. Well did he teach, if Harrison required instruction, how a true and grateful heart should offer up its thanksgivings. He did not follow the usual repetition of prayers, which from long custom are repeated without effort, and in which, whilst the tongue mumbles, the heart is absent; but he spoke as if the lost child was restored to *him*, and breathed an atmosphere of devotion around him which all seemed anxious to inhale.

How different this scene, in the solitude of a chamber, to the public exhibition in a church, where men of seventy repeat the fifth, and ladies of ninety most piously supplicate that they may not break the seventh, commandment! In the absolution, also, the lips of nine out of ten may be seen murmuring what the priest alone should utter; and the whole service, from its constant repetition, becomes a matter of memory rather than prayer. And while the eyes are roaming about in all directions, some dwelling on a face, and some on a ribbon, the words are uttered with the accustomed volubility; the usual uprisings and genuflexions are performed; and the congregation walk out with richly-dressed servants carrying their useless prayer-books: the whole world acknowledging, with unaffected simplicity, the devotion and propriety of their neighbour.

Harrison had not entered a church for twenty-two years; and yet not a day had passed that three times at least he had not offered up his prayers for assistance and support.

'I would ask you to stay and dine with us,' said Harrison, 'but that this cottage has been a stranger to the stranger—here the sound of revelry, the shout of happiness, has never penetrated. I built it myself as my church, and nothing has ever profaned the temple. A brighter day, perhaps merely the bright spark before the light of life is extinguished, seems about to shine upon me; but I will never leave this cottage, or ever forget the hand which has upheld me through the severity of my trial.'

'I dare say,' said the clergyman, after he had mentioned the impossibility of his remaining—for we are bound in truth to say that the rector enjoyed, in proper moderation, the pleasures of the table—'that my horse is nearly as tired of waiting for me, as my friends are at Mrs. Talbot's. I believe I have little more to relate than that with which I have made you acquainted. Your son is at present at Gibraltar; your daughter-in-law about five miles distant from you. The cloud which hung over his birth has now cleared away; and when you hear of your son's honourable conduct through life, and see how steadily he has pursued the right path—praised by Nelson, and rewarded by Collingwood and St. Vincent—you will not look with an unfavourable eye upon your daughter, when I inform you that she first instructed him—first taught him to read and to write—and on her knees heard him repeat his first prayer. It is due to her that she should be known to you; and she has, I dare say, long before this, despatched her letter, announcing the discovery we have made. The German doctor and the solicitor are ready with their proofs to convince you he is your son—as they are satisfied from their search that you are the father. I am, however, in duty bound to tell you, that the man who stole him from you left him all the money he possessed, and likewise left the clue by which this has been unravelled.'

'Money!' said Harrison; 'my son will never want that. I had an affluent fortune years and years ago;—here I have not spent one-fifth of my income; and from another source the supplies must be handsome.

Good-bye, sir! you will return to your friends with a light heart and cheerful countenance, feeling that in this day's visit you have cheered the heart of the aged, strengthened the infirm, and conducted two people from the abyss of sorrow to the very pinnacle of happiness!'

The wife, who was not at all convinced that the report was true, was not the less grateful to the rector, whose eyes became rather dim as the old people again and again pressed his hand, and as even the servant bowed her head and prayed God's blessing on him.

The cob had certainly manifested great impatience; he had established a regular rut by pawing the ground; and had cribbed the post so earnestly, that it gave the upright an appearance of utility in defending the gate from clumsy coachmen. It was six o'clock; the dinner-bell must have rung at Mrs. Talbot's; the rector had five miles to make good, and then to apologize for his dress; but the cob was as eager as his master. And Harrison heard the quick trot of that sturdy animal as it retired from his cottage, and left him once more in the solitude he had coveted.

But the cottage that evening changed its appearance; there was an air of brightness about it it had never known since its existence. Harrison seemed to grow young; the wife was seen actually in the lane; and the barrier which shut them from the world was evidently broken down.

The rector was hailed with real joy on his arrival. His countenance was sufficient to convince the party of his success; and the only envy expressed was that others had been denied the pleasure of conveying happiness to the Harrisons. Susan laughed, and cried, and cared not, in the exhilaration of the moment, for any uneasiness she might have given either Mrs. Talbot or her husband, had he been near, as she threw her arms round the rector's neck and kissed him.

'Rather pleasant payment that!' said the doctor. 'I say, Mr. Lawyer, if our fees were paid in such sweet coin, we should not wish to decline our professional attendance!'

'And as we are parties concerned in this transaction, and evidently active agents for both parties, I consider the payment made to the rector as a promissory note; the same amount of which is due to both of us.' And as the gallant attorney muttered these words, the dinner was announced; and he offered himself to conduct Susan.

'That's what you call a note of hand I suppose, Mr. Lawyer,' continued the doctor, 'payable at sight; but I give you warning that if I don't participate in the profits, I shall inform Captain Bowling that you have exacted payment from a "*femme couverte*," and subjected yourself to an action, which is not so pleasant sometimes, especially with the navy.'

CHAPTER XLVII.

IN WHICH THERE IS SOME ACCOUNT OF 'NIGHTS AT SEA.'

If the French account had been credited in England, Sir James Saumarez's gallant action at Algesiras would have been believed a perfect defeat. It certainly was no victory to England: and as one ship was left behind, the French had the best claim to the laurel. Still, the attack was spirited; and the scant winds may be accused of having contributed more to the defence of the French squadron than any resistance made by them. Bowling and the fighting doctor were very crestfallen at the result of their day's action. And when the shattered state of the *Cæsar* and *Pompie* was remarked, it appeared a certainty that the French rear-admiral would be able to make good his retreat to Cadiz, if his ships were not so injured by being run aground as to render it imperative on him to burn them rather than they should remain to be burnt by the English.

The French rear-admiral despatched an express overland to Cadiz, to claim the assistance of Admirals Massaredo and Dumanoir. On the 9th, five Spanish sail-of-the-line and three frigates put to sea from Cadiz, under the command of Don Juan de Moreno, and proceeded to Algesiras to give convoy to the French squadron. But this time had not been lost by the English. Their ships, all but the *Pompie*, were got ready for another brush; and as the two squadrons united, and stood towards Cabrita Point, Captain Bowling had the satisfaction of seeing the order for weighing and preparing for action flying at the *Cæsar's* mast-heads.

The gallant action which followed, and which immortalized the names of Saumarez and Keats, gave Bowling an insight into a general engagement—an advantage to the young officer inconceivable; for acting in concert, like fiddling in concert, must be much practised before the performers arrive at any perfection. Single actions were as plentiful as rain in April; not a day came without some account arriving of successes gained. And the navy of Great Britain, at that time, stood singularly pre-eminent above all other navies of the world. The battles of St. Vincent, of the Nile, and of Copenhagen, had given us the supremacy; and we had officers afloat who well knew how to maintain it. He must indeed have been a strangely unfortunate man who passed through his time in that service and was never in action; it must have been an *inaction* quite incredible.

'I think, sir,' said the doctor one evening, when the captain and his friend were playing chess in the after-cabin, as the *Thames* was bobbing about off Cadiz, watching the combined fleet in that port, 'that every man in his lifetime does a vast number of useless things,'

'I should think so, doctor,' said Bowling; 'but what particular useless thing do you think I have done lately?'

'Why, sir, I think, for instance, a captain to marry in war time, when he is spliced one day and the splice drawn the next, is a very useless ceremony. To pay for what he never enjoys; to have all the cares of matrimony and all its privations, without any of its pleasures, is certainly a very useless work, and, to my mind, highly unsatisfactory.'

'And yet, doctor, I would not for all the world be disunited.'

'Ay, sir, all married men,' said the doctor, 'say the same. They are in the trap, and spread out the bait to catch the others. I am all for liberty, either in matters of religion, state, or the common circumstances of life; and as for marriage, I hold it in perfect abhorrence in a sailor—it's a capital resource for a lawyer or a parson, but it was never intended for soldiers or sailors. It's like water, foolishly used by some people as a beverage, whereas it was only meant by nature to wash or shave with. It may be applied medicinally, to be sure, but then in very small quantities, and considerably altered in appearance and taste.'

'I am afraid, doctor, you are no advocate for a black list and six-water grog?'

'There again you see, sir, how you bear out my argument; if water were a blessing you would not give it as a punishment. For my part, I think the greatest punishment which can be inflicted upon the human race is marriage.'

'Very comfortable reflection for me, doctor,' said Bowling; 'in the meantime your king's in check.'

'If we look back on the history of the world,' said the doctor, 'and we all talk of the wisdom of our ancestors, we shall find those jolly old gentlemen had no idea of being yoked together like two bullocks in a plough. They had just as many as they could pay for, and they were not prosecuted for bigamy.'

'I fancy,' said Bowling, 'I have just as many as I can pay for.'

'Ay, sir, as Selden says, they are expensive playthings; those who have wives must pay for their trinkets, as those who have monkeys must pay for the glasses they break. I count, sir, that I am now your "better." I can go where I will without trouble. I am always at single anchor, ready to avail myself of any chance. You cannot unmoor without difficulty; nor can you move without a barge load of birds, bandboxes, maids' trunks, carpet-bags, sweetmeats, and sandwiches—that's check-mate, sir!'

'Why, doctor, you talked me out of it!'

'There again you see, sir, the sad effects of marriage—the subject closely concerned you; and in listening to that, you became inattentive to this. If I was First Lord of the Admiralty, no married man should ever have a ship. They are always thinking of home—of their expenses—of their fifteen children: they are crippled in their resources; and in many cases are not so desperately brave as before their marriage.'

'I must confess, doctor, that all my thoughts are at home. Every day now seems an age, which I linger through to get nearer to Susan; and I could willingly resign the service to live with her in the seclusion of the country.'

'And very tired you would soon get of that. Which is the worse, to live in the country, or to be a horse in a mill, is difficult to decide; both go through the same monotonous round—they never extend either their intellectual or ambulatory circle. They both lazily loll through their work, and hail darkness with delight as they escape from their toil to get quietly to bed. It is a life of existence too dependent to be pleasant—too lonesome to be coveted. A midshipman's berth is preferable to a cottage in seclusion; and an active life, with even poverty for a shipmate, is more to my fancy than the sad, sullen sombreness of what is styled rural retirement.'

'Place your men, doctor; I shall never be dull in the country, for I am sure of you as a visitor.'

'Then pray, sir, cut down all your trees, and keep your ropes for swings out of sight—I should hang myself in a week!'

'Leave that for Ketch after you have shot Captain Cornish's Irish friend. Have you forgotten that?'

'Not quite, sir; nor will it grow very stale before we meet again. I confess I long to have a shot at that fire-eater, although no man can think less of a duel than I do. It's a foolish appeal—the remnants of ancient barbarism in men, as jewels dangling from the ears are in women. Ear-rings are just as preposterous as nose-rings; and nothing but putting them through the noses of sows made the women ashamed of such gewgaws. But this Irishman is so fond of the sport that I would not deprive him of his chance of amusement for the world. And as for his long friend, by this time he has had enough of actions; and having always been ungrateful will now become vindictive.

The officers of the watch put an end to the game and the discourse by informing the captain that there was a vessel to the eastward. The captain jumped on deck; the doctor put by the chess-men and took a glass of madeira before he followed, saying to himself, 'Now a little amusement before going to bed would be very gratifying. We have had a mimic war, and now for a real one.' In this, however, the fighting doctor was disappointed. The ship was always clear for action; and it required little time to stow the hammocks and get the men at quarters; but when hope was the highest,

the private signal was shown from the stranger; and at eleven o'clock the *Thames* and the brig *Pasley* were in communication. The brig had brought despatches for the *Thames*, and with them an order to repair to Portsmouth instantly.

With the alacrity with which a good officer always obeys orders, however disagreeable, Captain Bowling made sail for his destination. The doctor, although cruelly disgusted that the stranger was a friend, made up his mind that as his captain had been fortunate through life, something might turn up in crossing the Bay of Biscay; and, as in the sanguine and the ambitious, hope never dies until the man is absolutely dead, so the thought of another fight never was absent from the doctor, until the ship actually let go her anchor.

During her passage home, although the Bay of Biscay was crowded with vessels, the *Thames* only communicated with the *Sylph*, a brig, under the command of Captain Dashwood. This gallant little vessel had single-handed attacked the *Artemise*, a large French frigate of forty-four guns and three hundred and fifty men. There are few actions on record which deserve to be handed down from sire to son in the navy more than this gallant affair. The *Sylph*, after having received several heavy broadsides from this powerful frigate, succeeded in obtaining a position within *pistol* shot on the weather-bow of the *Artemise*. For two hours and five minutes did this pigmy assail the giant; and with such coolness and precision were her guns fired, with so much judgment was she manœuvred, that at the expiration of that time the *Artemise* wore and ran away, leaving the little *Sylph* with her standing and running rigging cut to pieces and unable to pursue.

Even Napoleon could not gloss over this affair—the facts were undeniable; the disgrace beyond all imagination. And in order to intimidate, since he could not conceal, the French captain was tried at a court-martial, and condemned to be shot for his miserable conduct on this occasion, which sentence Bonaparte approved, and ordered to be carried into execution.*

The doctor was greatly in requisition (not to assist the wounded, for incredible as it may appear, it is a fact that only *one* person was slightly wounded, and not one man killed). He shook every one of the officers by the hand; he envied the commonest landsman on board; and he let out a very philosophical episode upon Fortune, in which he was not very complimentary to that goddess.

In every game of chess in which the captain and the doctor engaged, this action was always uppermost in the mind of the latter; if ever he gave a check by a pawn to a bishop, or rook, or knight, he invariably said, 'The *Sylph* and *Artemise*, sir—just the same position; perhaps you will be good enough to wear ship and run away.' And then he would look at the pawn with admiration, and draw a comparison between the cutting out of the *Hermione* by Sir Edward Hamilton and this affair of the *Sylph*, quite at a loss to which to give the preference.

It was at Portsmouth that Bowling heard of the sad fate of Curlew; and he was loud in his complaint against the crying injustice of pushing on men in the service who, never having learnt to obey, are unfit to command. Many a time when he attended at the passing of a midshipman, he remembered the mockery of the affair in Curlew's case; and having seen with his own eyes how fretful and impatient those men become who, having no confidence in themselves, cannot repose it in others, he endeavoured conscientiously to do his duty, and never would sign a passing certificate without he had so much confidence in the midshipman that he would gladly have taken him for a lieutenant. This subject produced a conversation between the captain and the doctor; and the latter cut it short by regretting Curlew's death, as he was down in the doctor's book for a little satisfaction arising from the previous quarrel at the Cape of Good Hope. He rubbed his name out with some impatience, and regretted he could not arrange his quarrel without the interference of Death.

Bowling had prepared his letter for Susan, in which he announced his arrival, and gave some description of Sir James Saumarez's action. He desired her not to start to meet him, as in all probability the *Thames* would be ordered to sea immediately; and he concluded by saying he had a presentiment that, however close they might be, it would be some time before they met.

The doctor also had a letter written, and directed to the Irish gentleman at Captain Cornish's. It announced the arrival of the frigate, and expressed his readiness to meet his antagonist on South Sea beach, any or every morning, until one party was dead, or the ship sailed. He concluded by recommending that both should change their names, so that if they fought no one would be the wiser, and the recognizance would not be escheated.

No sooner was Bowling on shore, and had delivered his despatches, than he received the unwelcome news of the treaty of Amiens; and he was desired to hold the *Thames* in readiness to sail at a moment's warning. Lighters were ordered out with provisions; the guard-ship supplied various necessaries; a tank brought out water; and in the busiest time of the war never was more despatch used. As the bum-boat woman, that seamen's morning newspaper, was allowed alongside, the news of the peace

* Marshal's Naval Biography, vol. ii., p. 456.

was soon over the ship. Some rubbed their hands with joy at the thought of being paid off, and being at liberty to spend their money on shore. Others, who had been seduced from their homes when young, now thought of their return to the cottage in which they had spent so many happy days. Some capered about the decks, talking of peace and plenty, liberty and the land. All were in high spirits; for news of any kind has a magical effect on the sailor. One man paced the deck in an unquiet mood: it was the doctor. His favourite avocation, like Othello's occupation, was gone. He lived only in the hope of war; and although the best-hearted fellow alive, he was, without exception, the most resolutely determined fighter the navy ever produced.

Neither did Bowling's appearance on board make the doctor easier in his mind. 'We sail to-morrow,' said the captain, as he came on board, 'and I fancy we shall have a long run of it before we anchor again.'

'What, sir,' said the doctor, 'and no time to get our linen washed?'

'Faith, doctor, the Admiralty care very little about that. They think we can wash and wear as well as the fore-mast men.'

'And your lovely Susan, sir!' added the doctor, with a smile. 'What a delight it must be to have a wife, and never to see her! I should think she might as well have remained Miss Monckton as have married a sailor.'

'There's nothing but disappointment in this life, doctor. I dare say you are as vexed as I am.'

'I have sent an invitation to my Irish friend, and now I shall not be here to welcome him.'

'Not without you can imitate the Irish bird, and be in two places at once. By the time he comes here, we shall be down the Channel, rattling away to a far shore. We are ordered to India, to take out the news of the peace, and we must make the best of our passage.'

'Oh, murder!' ejaculated the doctor. 'No wine at Madeira, and no oranges at St. Jago! Not a drop of comfort at Teneriffe! No, nor any plantains, bananas, or guavas! Not a fight the whole blessed way! Not a prize, nor a cut out, nor a quarrel! And there are all those Tom Fools below singing about peace and plenty, and they are going to starve upon six-upon-four the whole blessed voyage. No man knows what is going to happen to him; and Nebuchadnezzar, when he thought he was going to have a good dinner in his palace, took a seven years' salad in the field.'

Bowling had time to write again to Susan. If he wished it, he could not have exchanged; for there was no time for anything. Twenty-four hours had not elapsed before the *Thames* was again under weigh. Discipline soon silenced all murmurs, and occupation soon restored the sailors' happiness; for they are not like other people: their natural home is on the waters; and when once the land recedes from the sight, they are pleased with their situations and resigned to their lot. The evening song on the forecastle; the occasional bull-dance to a miserable scrape on a cracked fiddle; a game at skylarks; swinging the monkey; crossing the line; and a slight variation in the way of exercise aloft in reefing; their time goes pleasantly and rapidly. They have few wants, and require fewer comforts. All of their world is concentrated in the narrow dimensions of a ship; and when they return, after their long absence, the greatest happiness of which they are capable is within reach, and bounded in the narrow circumference of Common Hard or Plymouth Dock.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

IN WHICH THE RUBICON IS PASSED, AND A MORAL LESSON INCULCATED.

AWAY went the *Thames* under a crowd of sail. Her orders were to make the best of her way to the Cape, and thence another vessel was to communicate the intelligence, and the *Thames* return to Portsmouth. 'The sooner we are there, my lads,' said the captain, as he gave his men an address upon their cruise, 'the sooner we shall be back again;' a truth self-evident, but very consolatory from the mouth of the captain.

The fighting doctor was now driven to chess; and had no hope to live upon but his duel on his return. Days passed, the beautiful island of Madeira, and its still more beautiful wine, was untouched; the snow-topped Teneriffe was merely made at a vast distance; the sans-culottes guard of St. Jago were undisturbed; not a vessel was boarded, though many were hailed; the trade wind urged on the frigate until she was launched as it were into a dead calm, and approached the Equator.

'At any rate now we shall have some fun,' said the doctor, 'and I'll make up for lost time when we cross the line.'

'It occurs to me, doctor,' said the third lieutenant, 'that you have never crossed the line yourself.'

'That won't hinder me, I presume, from joining in the fun.'

'Certainly not, *after* you are shaved.'

'Shaved!' cried the indignant Esculapius, 'I should like to see the man who will shave me.'

'That pleasure will be denied you, for you will be blindfolded.'

'Indeed,' said the doctor, rubbing his hands, 'then I fancy I shall have one or two

in my list from contusions directly after that event; they won't shave me with impunity.'

'Pooh, pooh,' exclaimed the lieutenant, 'you cannot stem a torrent; you had better go quietly down the stream. Did you ever hear of a ship beating to windward against a hurricane?'

'No,' replied the doctor, 'but I have heard of a vigorous defence of a small castle, and of the garrison being buried under its ruins; I'll shut myself up in my cabin, and they will not get me out of that without some desperate courage.'

'Bless you,' said the lieutenant, 'they will draw you like a badger; and the more you kick, the more you'll be scraped. If you go quietly, like a sheep to the slaughter, they will only give you a taste of the lather and bundle you into the tub, out of which the sooner you scramble the better.'

The doctor was a thorough gentleman, and he had no idea of being handled by such low hands as those of common seamen. He declared that if he felt disinclined to allow this privileged freedom on such an event, it arose principally from the right which seemed asserted, that he must be shaved *nolens volens*.

'It's all stuff,' observed the master. 'Give Neptune a gallon of rum, and he will allow you to shave his beard; otherwise, depend upon it, that you have got nothing that your loblolly-boy can mix half so beastly as you will taste.'

'Very well,' said the doctor, 'it's a declaration of war; and in this war I must be successful. Their spite can only last an hour; mine may continue for six months.'

The captain had crossed the line; so had the doctor, although he was resolved to let them find it out. But captains very easily evade the orders of Neptune. The steward arranges all that in the morning, and the promise is fulfilled after the ceremonies are completed. On that day the ship may be said to be given up to the seamen. It is a day of riot, but the riot is controlled within certain bounds. It occupies their attention for days before the event, and is the theme of universal discussion. On that day an unpopular man may be made to ascertain the exact degree of unpopularity which he enjoys. It is a cloak under which the most malignant feelings may be gratified. It is a custom which has come down from antiquity, and this custom has grown into a law. A cruel, vindictive boatswain's mate is a sure victim; anyone known to wear a white feather is another object; a sneaking, tale-bearing lad is likely to be corrected in quite a novel manner; and the bold, but determined tyrant is here overcome by numbers, and their revenge is gratified. Only those are safe from the worst part of the ceremony who have been shaved before, or who have made Neptune's acquaintance on the Equator. They scrape a little sometimes for the tropic of Cancer, but this toll-paying does not clear the Equator; but paying at the latter clears the barrier of Capricorn.

It is quite wonderful how accurately the seamen know every man who has crossed before. It is almost impossible to deceive them. A sailor's memory, in regard to ships and stations, is as accurate as that of the historian who has fortified his chronology by a perfect knowledge of the memoria technica. It is in vain the liar seeks to establish his claim to pass free. He is questioned narrowly as to the ship he was in; the year he crossed the line; who commanded: where she sailed from; and it is a certainty that some one present is able to convict him. Out of the thousands who have endeavoured to evade the law, not ten have ever succeeded.

Now the doctor never attempted to conceal that he had not paid toll, although he had crossed the line; for he was sick when the *Echo* crossed, and had never been shaved or paid forfeit. On the contrary, he loudly asserted he never had, and never would. He was a man universally respected for his courage. The crew would have followed him to the gates of the regions below, and would lend him a hand to take Cerberus away from his post. They all delighted in him when he was not in his dispensary. There he was 'monarch of all he surveyed,' and he settled his subjects in the following summary manner:

'Well, Jones, what's the matter with you?'

'I don't know, sir; I feel a shivering all over me. I've got a headache, and I feel so weak I cannot stand.'

'Put out your tongue; hold out your hand. Ah! I'll take care of you. Go to your hammock.' Jones was always an active man, and no skulker. The doctor would visit him five or six times, and pay him as much attention as if he were an admiral.

'What's the matter with you, Smith?' Smith was a regular dodge Pompey, always at hide-and-seek with the doctor and the purser's steward.

'I've just the same as Jones, sir.'

'Let's see your tongue. Ah! your complaint is just beginning. Are you very cold?'

'Yes, sir, very.

'Swallow this:' a most diabolical mixture, in which every nastiness of the laboratory was mixed. 'Now start off; run up and down the fore rigging until you're warm; then come to me, and I'll put a blister on your back, and bleed you for an hour. Away with you! Well, Brown, what brings you here?'

'I've got a pain in my head, sir.'

'Why, you rascal, you were drunk last night.'

'Haven't been drunk, sir, for six months.'

'Then you are a much greater fool than ever I thought you to be. It's a faint heart which never rejoices. What watch have you got to-night?'

'The first watch, sir.'

'I shall beg the officer of the watch to give you a look-out for the whole four hours. You will have no headache when you go to bed; and if you have, you will sleep it off without physic. Now then, Green!'

'I'm troubled with fits, sir; and I feel one's a-coming.'

'So do I,' said the doctor. 'Carry him on deck as quick as you can! Get fourteen buckets of water, and pour them over his mouth! Look sharp; he'll begin to kick in a moment!' and away went Green for his shower-bath.

The doctor was always slow to believe a sailor ill, and he was much disliked from his first universal recipe, which was—a stoppage of grog. Some of the men had resolved to physic him on crossing the line; and the doctor knew mankind well enough to calculate the measure of revenge which would be meted out to him. The captain had never spoken to him about this crossing; and his being so great a favourite rather operated against than for him.

The day dawned, and the frigate was supposed to be about a mile from the Equator. The youngsters and idiots had been persuaded that the Equator was a line which ran round the world, or a cable to keep it from falling in halves; and when the boobies went to look through the telescope, a rope-yarn had been introduced across the field-glass, which satisfied some of the accuracy of the statement. But when the man at the masthead called out that a boat was pulling towards the ship, all the novices were sent below; as none but those who had been introduced to Neptune could receive him.

The doctor rose with a spirit of resistance quite worthy of the badger to which he had been likened. He was told the worse the clothes he put on, the better for the occasion. He then betook himself on deck, and his resolute countenance betokened his determination of resistance.

The sailors, although privileged to a certain extent, regarded the honour ever accorded to the quarter-deck; and when the word was passed for all those who had not crossed the line to go on the lower deck, the doctor walked to the break of the quarter-deck, and gave a very significant look of pity at the quiet, sheep-like manner in which the order was obeyed. Some of Neptune's tipstaffs sat upon the combings of the hatchway to keep the rest below; and when the same order extended itself to the officers, the doctor said that Neptune might go to a place where, if all reports are true, the king of the ocean would soon be high and dry: neither would he budge an inch.

Neptune was now seen advancing along the gangway, drawn on a carronade slide, enthroned amidst a profusion of swabs, and escorted by some of his Tritons, dressed as nearly as possible to that natural suit which is easiest to the swimmer.

The captain entered into the frolic with much spirit; and on Neptune presenting him with a bottle of real sea-water, drawn from the lowest depth, where the plumb-line had never fathomed, and where the mermaids sported near the coral rocks, Bowling expressed his gratitude at renewing his acquaintance with the watery god, whose flipper he had shaken on board the *Echo*.

'There are some on board, Captain Bowling, who I believe have never seen my face before; and as they are my subjects, I shall desire to muster them.'

'Certainly, Mr. Neptune,' said Bowling; 'and in the meantime, perhaps your majesty might wish to breakfast. Here is a bottle of rum, which I trust may be acceptable.'

'I think I see a face here,' observed Neptune, 'which I have not seen before,' pointing to the doctor.

'He crossed your dominion with me in the *Echo*,' said the captain, 'although I believe he was prevented from the honour of an introduction by sickness.'

'My secretary' (here a great, bushy-bearded tar came forward, holding a holy-stone for a book) 'will see if his name is down as having presented his offering.'

'Can't say that it is,' said Green. 'He's very fond of water, your majesty, and his name is down as one what's done you brown, and put your subjects on six-water grog.'

All hands, captain and all, joined in the laugh, whilst the doctor's whiskers seemed curling with anger.

'I shall make your acquaintance when I sit on my throne to receive strangers. Now to business, lads!' And away went Neptune, his escort dancing and singing in grotesque attitudes and hoarse voices, to the larboard gangway, where he took up his position on the bow of the cutter, which boat was half filled with water. The centre shifting thwart was removed, and placed head and stern, resting on the second thwart from aft, so as to make a balance. The fire-engine was placed in the launch, with a plentiful supply of water, and very willing hands to work the engine were ready to begin.

It is customary to commence with the midshipmen; but Neptune's barber, whose lather is of the most unsavoury materials, only flourishes the razor, or, to a very unpopular one, gives a gentle scrape, and reminds him of his mortality by giving him an extra plunge in the water.

The doctor got near the gangway to witness the scene. His curiosity got the better of his prudence. The youngster who first came up was a great favourite, and as he

was placed blindfolded on the treacherous thwart, kept in its proper place by Neptune's executioner occupying the other end, he was observed to turn a little pale.

'Don't be frightened,' said Neptune, 'happy to make your acquaintance. Barber, don't you scratch his skin away to make his beard grow.'

'No, your majesty,' said the barber, passing a smooth iron hoop over his soft skin.

'How do you feel, sir, after your shave?'

Just as the youngster was about to answer, the executioner removed his weight, and smack went the youngster into the water. He was up in a minute, and was handed out of the boat, being told he was free. Whilst this was going on, the wash-deck tub had been brought alongside the mainmast, and the main-top men, or men who chose to occupy that station, had drawn up lots of buckets of water, intending, when the fun began, to deluge the people below. The doctor was directly under the top brim, and as nothing had occurred on deck to make the splash general, they delayed their attack.

Now came a boatswain's mate, a man detested by the crew, a great talker, a little doer, a savage at punishment, a spy, a reporter; his name was the signal for a general rush to the boat. He was placed on the plank, blindfolded by a wet swab. The barber prepared his lather; Neptune declared his beard too long, and forthwith the torment began. He was lathered with tar and other beastliness; which being done, he was asked where he was born.

He answered 'Stockport,' a word which required the mouth to be a little open, which was no sooner opened than the barber rammed the long shaving brush into his mouth. The shout was universal at the wry faces the fellow made. He was now to be shaved; and if he had marked the barber's back with a cat-o'-nine-tails, the barber took ample revenge by scraping his face with a notched hoop, and, as he said, he feared much that in getting rid of the lather he was obliged to take some of the skin also: but that a little salt water would be found an excellent palliative. At this, souse went the victim; and as the doctor grinned at the cruelty of the proceeding, the fire-engine played; the water smacked right in the doctor's face and eyes, the maintop became a cataract; and whilst he was fairly blinded from the unexpected attack, he was lifted into the cutter, and ducked most unmercifully. They bundled him out unceremoniously enough; but it seemed as if all the powers had been concentrated against him, for bucket after bucket was poured upon him, and as he got on the main-deck endeavouring to escape, he was met by a party of midshipmen, and some others of his own mess, who extinguished every spark of fire in his bosom by almost drowning him.

In this fun Bowling took part, and he only laughed as he got his share of the drenching. The doctor, seeing that all opposition was useless, and being a powerful man, acted on the offensive against every one. He caught one youngster in his arms and put him head foremost into the wash-deck tub, and left him kicking his heels about, like a fellow standing on his noddle. He fitted a bucket on the master's head, and having now got his steam up, he resolved to be revenged upon Neptune and his barber. This was a profanation none but the hard-headed doctor could have dared; he waited his opportunity, jumped into the cutter, lathered the barber, threw all he could at Neptune, capsized the executioner, and made his escape, in spite of the volume which issued from the fire-engine, by crossing the launch and landing on the starboard gangway.

Neptune called upon his officers to fetch the delinquent; but the doctor made good his retreat below, and stood between two guns on the main-deck brandishing a handspike, and threatening destruction to all who dared approach him. Neptune, resolving not to suffer from the indignity, ordered the fire-engine to be taken below, and from the other side of the deck wash the doctor out, whilst his myrmidons backed up the attack by hundreds of buckets. This was a waterspout attack, which might have swamped a jolly-boat in five minutes; but the doctor withstood it manfully; but finding himself sinking from the interminable, incessant dash of water on his face, he charged the fire-engine—in his impetuosity he fell, and a dozen men instantly seized him. Although Mr. Green was barber to his watery majesty, he did his office at this moment by deputy.

'He's in a fit, lads!' said Green; 'pour fourteen buckets of water over his mouth—that's the right thing to be done, for he ordered the same to me.' The doctor was now very near a real faint; he had exerted himself to the utmost to recover his fall, and the exertion, with the everlasting sousing of water over his face, made him at last as resistless as a child.

'Hand him up,' said Green; 'I'll shave him!'

'You'll do no such thing,' said Jones; 'he's had enough, and I'm blessed if any of you take him on deck!—Why he's half dead now!'

'What's this?' said the master, who came to see the fun.

'It's the doctor, sir,' replied Jones; 'he's nearly dead—and these beggars want to drown him!'

A rally of five midshipmen, who had possessed themselves of the fire-engine, soon drove the men from their victim; and the doctor was taken below, having just sense enough left to appreciate the moral of

Gulliver amongst the Liliputians, and to calculate accurately what chance a man has in a hornet's nest.

The shaving continued on deck until the water in the cutter was as dirty as that of a horse-pond after twenty animals have trampled in it. Still there was no abatement of punishment to the disliked; indeed, these were generally kept for the last. But whilst all this was carried on under the directions of the sovereign of the Trident, he himself was not free from everlasting assaults. Every now and then his beard would be unceremoniously profaned by being pulled by the barber, or washed by angry subjects; it hurt not his mimic majesty's feelings, seeing it was only a swab or a bundle of rope-yarns carefully combed out and tarred for the august ceremony.

Every man and boy in the ship took part in this frolic. Youngsters who could not carry a bucket walked about with a tin pannikin, which they dipped in every reservoir of water, and shied in the nearest man's face. No offence was committed by this attack of youth upon age; it was all fair play; and no one mumped over his fallen dignity but the doctor, who, having dried and dressed himself, sat in his cabin with a pair of loaded pistols, and endeavoured to find consolation in books, in spite of the roar above him.

At last all were shaved and made free of the ocean for ever. Neptune had taken a pretty fair swig at the rum bottle, and the executioner and barber were half drunk. It was after the last ceremony, when Neptune had been drawn round the deck, and had disappeared over the head as if gone to his coral depths, that one or two who had suffered the most caught hold of the barber and shaved him. Although this was stopped by the others on the score of custom and the necessary protection ever given to Neptune's officers, yet Master Green had got quite enough to satisfy him, that no man should be tyrannical without he is sure to be maintained in power; that he had made more enemies in a day than he could either soothe or control in a year; and many men in different situations might profit by Green's example, and learn that discretion and prudence are more likely to ensure friendship than a momentary tyranny. The barber was never a favourite after that transaction.

From the moment the boatswain's call announced the order for all wet things to be hung upon the clothes-lines, from that second discipline was restored from all the riot of unlicensed liberty; one moment was only required to restore authority. The decks were set to rights; the officers appeared in their proper dresses; the men were mustered in dry clothing; the buckets, tubs, and every utensil used in this watery war, were restored to their places;—and no one but those accustomed to such sights would believe how suddenly order and regulation overthrew riot and pleasure.

At quarters, not a man was found drunk. Neptune's eyes were a little bleared, but that was no doubt owing to salt water and a hot sun, his majesty not being much accustomed to be scorched. Green's face bore some signs of ill-usage; and one or two of the men exhibited desperate ruts in the skin. The doctor walked the deck with the step of a giant, and with a look of anger which even the water had not quenched. There were no additions to his sick-list that evening; he was in a cutting humour, and would have tried his lancet and scalpel upon any candidate for repose.

The topsails were reefed as usual after quarters; and afterwards the fiddler and drummer were allowed to make a noise, to which the sailors were permitted to dance. There was no wind, or likelihood of any. The idle sail flapped heavily against the mast, and the jib was undetermined which side to swell out. Some bottles of rum, which were mixed with water, were sent to Neptune and his assistants. There was a regular concert on the forecastle; and Bowling as he leant over the gangway of the fine frigate he commanded, listened to the rough song of the sailor, and thought of his early life, when he had been sheltered by the weather bulwark, as the 'hoarse wind made the treble and the bass' to the song of his own making, which he had been called upon to sing. The retrospection of life is never happy but where Fortune has smiled. It is sweet, we are told, to call back to our minds the happy moments of our youth; but we are also told, that there is no greater pang than in the hour of misery and oppression to recall to our remembrance scenes of pleasure and of delight.

CHAPTER XLIX.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN HOW MUCH INJUSTICE THERE IS IN OBTAINING JUSTICE; AND A PROOF IS GIVEN OF HUDIBRAS'S ASSERTION,—

> 'So those blackguards who throw dirt
> Do but defile, but cannot hurt.'

'I THINK,' said Mr. Pouch, 'you had better consider the offer, Mr. Clasp, which I make to your client, without prejudice, of course, and settle this business amicably.'

'As far as I am concerned, Mr. Pouch, I have no objection. Many in my situation would urge on a trial, which must be a lucrative affair to me, since your client is sure of being cast; but I am bound to say that all my persuasions with Mr. Boniface are useless.

He seems resolved to have justice done him; and as he is no longer a tenant of your client, he feels himself released from the last spark of respect which otherwise he might have retained.'

'Once more, Mr. Clasp! the inn in another village; all legal expenses paid; and a sum of ten pounds a year settled on the child.'

'Ten pounds, Mr. Pouch, would not buy the child its shoes, or pay for a wet-nurse! Look at what you offer for this injury! A man in a thriving situation turned suddenly out, and others put in to make a fortune upon the very business he established! A family rendered disgraceful by the seduction of their daughter; that daughter ruined and cast away like the most loathsome weed, and in a state likely to increase the heavy burden which already presses upon her! For this you offer a public house in a village where there is no traffic, and ten pounds settled upon a child unborn! Suppose the child dies; what then?'

'Then of course the allowance would cease.'

'I deal fairly with you, Mr. Pouch. I shall advise my client to reject the offer; and as the time is very close, I think no further communication can be requisite without a very different offer: such as, the reinstatement of Mr. Boniface, with a lease for his life; and at least one hundred a year settled on the daughter, and at her death to go to the child should it survive.'

Mr. Pouch rose, and waved his hand negatively, but positively. Such a proposition, it was thus signalized, could not be either proposed or accepted. The indignant Pouch, who had condescended much against his will to this interview at Clasp's cottage, rose in a dignified manner to withdraw; and Clasp, with all the conscious rectitude of a worthy man, escorted him to the outer door.

'Are we to proceed, Clasp?' said Pouch, thus unceremoniously taking off the handle of his name, and instituting a kind of familiarity never expected by Clasp. 'Are we to proceed, my dear Clasp? Do you know, I doubt your success in this first attempt; and a defeat would be fatal to *your* prospects.'

'My prospects, at this moment, are not the subject under consideration. It is my client's interest.'

'You are rather young and green, Clasp,' said Pouch, with a smile. 'Believe me, in all cases in this world, however much the public may be hoodwinked under the large wrapper of honour, self is before every one, and sooner or later every one is sacrificed to self. I would not ask you to do anything dishonourable; but a right understanding between us might greatly advance ourselves.'

'Why, Mr. Pouch, after your last remark I have only one to make, which is, that as I am young and green I am inclined not to be over-reached, if I can hinder it.'

Mr. Pouch had not left the house ten minutes before the Irish gentleman requested to see Mr. Clasp. He was admitted.

'Clasp, my brave fellow,' exclaimed the Hibernian to a man he had never addressed a word before to in his life, 'I'm come from Captain Cornish just to arrange this law-suit without either counsel, judge, or jury. So listen to me for a few seconds.'

'I really cannot, sir,' said Clasp. 'If any proposition is to be made, it must come through Captain Cornish's solicitor.'

'Blood and ouns, man! Not listen to me! It's an insult never yet passed upon one of my name. Oh, my jewel! you'll listen to me with most uncommon attention when I invite you to a ball, and give you some music nearer your ear than ever was whistled before!'

Clasp took no notice of the intimation, but opened the door, and, bowing his enemy out, thought seriously of his case. He had taken a comprehensive view of the affair. The action was brought for breach of promise; there was a count for seduction; another for depriving the father of the services of the daughter. The first counsel on the circuit was retained, and the court was likely to be crowded, as Captain Cornish was known to everybody; and although everybody shook hands with him, and everybody went to dinner when he was asked, yet everybody hated him, and a vast number despised him. Since Susan's marriage he had never been to Mrs. Talbot's. There he was sure to find the rector; and Cornish knew pretty exactly the opinion of that worthy man.

The court was crowded. The learned counsel opened the case, merely reciting the facts. A letter was produced in which an offer of marriage, when the unfortunate girl lingered on the balance of virtue, was made, was put in and read. Pouch was seen to whisper to the counsel he had engaged; who, as the witness, which was the girl herself, was about to leave the box, called out, 'Stop, stop, young lady. Although my learned friend, Mr. Twister, has gleaned all he can from you, there is some information behind which, I dare say, you will be kind enough to impart to me. Have you ever seen Captain Cornish write?'

'No, sir,' said the unfortunate girl.

'Pray, is his name to this letter?'

'No, sir.'

'Then how do you know it came from him?'

'He spoke to me about the promise afterwards.'

'Let us know, that's a sweet girl, what he said.'

The poor girl was so confused that she could not connect her history properly, upon seeing which the learned Badger embarrassed

her by changing his question a hundred times; which had the effect of throwing the girl into hysterics, in which state she was carried out of court, Mr. Badger assuring his lordship that it was quite requisite that she should be again placed in the witness-box.

'My lord,' said Twister, 'I have a witness in court who has received many communications from the defendant, and whose sacred character will entitle his evidence to the respect which it merits.'

The rector was called, sworn, and placed in the box. Pouch jumped up and whispered to Badger, who nodded his head with some rapidity. The rector swore to the handwriting. He had received dozens of letters from the defendant, and he had no hesitation in saying that the handwriting was that of the defendant.

'You say, sir,' said Badger, 'that you have no hesitation in saying this is the handwriting of the defendant?'

'I have none whatever,' replied the rector.

'Pray, sir, did you ever see him write?'

'Hundreds of times.'

'Hundreds of times! Pray, sir, did you ever keep an account of the number?'

The rector mildly remarked that it was a figurative mode of expression, by which he meant to say, 'Very often.'

'We do not deal in figures of speech here,' said Badger. 'You are sworn to speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Now, sir, I ask you, on your oath, have you seen him write hundreds of times?'

'No, sir, I have not.'

'Why, you just now said you had, sir. Which am I to believe?'

'Whichever you like, sir,' said the rector, with some gravity.

'You say, sir, you have received *dozens* of letters. How many dozen, sir, are you inclined to swear to?'

Mr. Twister interfered, and placed the witness under the protection of the judge. The judge remarked that the questions were not put with that courtesy usually accorded to witnesses whose words could not be doubted. But Badger, who was a low reptile, and who was well paid, looked unabashed at the rebuke of his lordship, and said he had a duty to perform to his client, which he should perform fearlessly; and took this opportunity of beginning to make some comments on the evidence: but he was stopped by Mr. Twister, and asked if he was going to make a speech.

'Well, sir,' said Badger, 'are you prepared to swear that you have received ten dozen letters from the defendant?'

'No, I am not.'

'Well, five dozen?'

'No, nor five dozen.'

'Three dozen?'

'No, nor three.'

'Two dozen?'

'Yes, I think I can conscientiously——'

'Oh, stop, sir! stop, sir! I don't ask you what you think, sir; I ask you what you *know*.'

'I tell you I know this letter is in the handwriting of the defendant.'

'Pray, sir, did you see him write it?'

'No, I did not.'

'Then I ask you, sir, as a clergyman, as the rector of this parish, as a man to whom all ought to look up with respect, how can you swear that the letter was written by the defendant?'

'The witness, Mr. Badger,' interrupted the judge, 'intends to say, that to the best of his knowledge and belief, and by the appearance of the similarity between the handwritings, this letter was written by the defendant.'

'I am sure,' said Mr. Badger, with a most provoking curl of the lip, 'that the reverend gentleman ought to be much indebted to your lordship for making him understand what he intends to say. The testimony has hitherto been so contradictory that I am quite at a loss to understand what is intended; but I will try again, for the benefit of the gentlemen of the jury. Will you have the kindness,' said Badger, putting on a most insinuating look, 'to inform the gentlemen of the jury what *you do* intend to say?'

The rector could not be put out of humour; but with a smile quite worthy of his Christian character, he answered, 'I will endeavour to explain.'

'Oh! really, sir,' said Badger, interrupting him, 'this is too bad. If you are obliged to *endeavour* to explain, I apprehend the gentlemen of the jury cannot give much credence to your evidence.'

'I must protest against this, my lord,' said Twister; 'it is very irregular.'

'I shall not come to my learned friend,' said Badger, rising with the storm which seemed brewing, 'for any lesson of regularity. I do not know anyone who brings so much his quarter-sessions practice into the court of assizes as my learned friend.'

Here was a general bustle amongst the magistrates, who took the insult offered to Twister as applicable to themselves, in allowing their court to be a bear-garden.

'I certainly,' said Twister, 'do not feel the least inclined to give lessons to so unpromising a pupil as my learned friend, for I never met with one less likely to do credit to his master.'

'I am not likely, I think, to own my learned friend as my master in anything but impertinence, and in that I am not inclined to be his pupil.'

Both now began to talk together in a style as disreputable as it was indecorous. The judge called them to order; and after the excitement was a little subsided, Mr. Badger looked at the rector, and said, 'Sir, I have been waiting this last quarter of an hour for your answer.'

It was impossible to repress the merriment of the court and jury ; even the judge smiled at this remark ; and the rector added a little more to it by his remark, that he had been waiting about that time not to disturb counsel in the acting of their several parts. Badger could not, however, shake the testimony of the rector in regard to the writing ; so he set to work to show that the rector was animated against Cornish, and questioned him as to a certain rencontre which took place between them. When he had failed in that, the poor girl was brought up again for torture. Now Badger attempted to ruin her character more completely than his client had effected ; and after having asked about her acquaintance with one or two boys, whom she admitted having kissed during the haymaking season when she was about fourteen, Badger commenced again a new attack.

'I think,' said Badger, 'you are acquainted with a Captain Bowling who lodged at your house?'

'I have seen him,' replied the girl.

'Seen him!—What, do you mean to say you never *spoke* to him?'

'Yes, I have spoken to him.'

'He's rather a good-looking man, I believe?' said Badger.

The girl was silent.

'Come, come, Miss Modesty, you need not be so very shy. Were you ever in the room alone with Captain Bowling?'

'Yes, I was, sir.'

'And pray what were you doing there?'

'I took some paper he asked for.'

'Why, surely, a young lady of your fashion and station was not a servant in your father's house?'

'I was not, but I went from curiosity to see him, as my father said he was the captain that had just fought a great battle.'

'Well, my dear, I suppose you found out, as the poet says, "Heroes in war are men, alas, in love"?'

'Sir!'

'Come now, did he not pat your hand—call you a pretty girl—and so on?'

'I believe he did, sir.'

'Believe!—don't you know it as a fact?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Come now, no trifling ; did he not kiss you?'

'He kissed my hand.'

'Oh!' cried Badger, laughing. 'Gentlemen of the jury, he kissed her hand!—Sailors are more gallant than that generally, my girl ; have you never found that out?'

'No, sir.'

'I presume you were more than fourteen when this happened?'

'Yes, sir, I was.'

'I don't expect you to tell me any more, so you may go down.'

'Stop!' said Twister ; who soon sifted out that the girl had told Cornish this during the time he made inquiries of her concerning Bowling, and that she had never mentioned it to anyone but him.

Here now were these two men busily employed ; the one, in proving that the girl was young, innocent, artless, seduced under a promise of marriage, having resisted all advances until love prompted credulity, and only fallen a sacrifice when her professed admirer had promised a secret marriage ; the other, in the most subtle manner, endeavouring to establish her as a low, wanton, loose, immoral woman, and turning the most trivial events into dark pictures of her mind and manners. And this was allowed, and is to this day tolerated in a place which is called a *court of justice*, in which an honest person's character is more blackened than in a coal-hole or a gin-palace.

Anything is allowed, any brow-beating of low-minded men, who, to gain their cause, are reckless of the path they pursue. And the confusion of innocence is glowingly painted as the proof of falsehood. But when Mr. Twister rose to reply, he armed himself with a laudable determination to do justice to his client, and to paint the defendant as nearly in his proper colour as his language would admit of. He went through the whole evidence ; he dwelt upon the vindictive malice of Cornish ; he pointed to the girl, and showed the jury the innocent victim of a well-trained plan ; he adverted to the meeting before the duel ; the heartless and cruel desertion ; the wreck of all her hopes ; the distress of the parent ; the ruin of all his exertions ;—and in one of those powerful appeals which, being invigorated by truth, came home to the mind of all, he called upon the jury to give such heavy damages as would convince every man that the rich were not above the law, or the wealthy able to control it.

The judge (England's greatest glory is the upright, the untainted, unsullied honour of her judges) did his duty. And Cornish slunk away, the object of pity and contempt, as the learned man summed up and commented upon the case. Neither did Mr. Badger escape unscathed for his low, disreputable conduct. 'There can be no doubt,' said the learned judge, 'but that the poor girl fell a victim to a promise often repeated of a private marriage ; and the defendant must for ever bear about with him the consciousness of having inflicted the most grievous injury upon a fellow-creature of which man is capable ; of having left her, who sacrificed her honour to a belief in his, a bye-word and a scorn—and of having, in defending the action, only aggravated her misfortune by the publicity it produces. Gentlemen of the jury, this case is clear ; a more disgraceful case never occupied a court of justice—and you will best show your feelings on this occasion by the amount of damages you award.'

This last hint was quite sufficient for the jury; they returned damages—fifteen hundred pounds. The judge gave an order for the affiliation of the child; and Cornish had the gratification of understanding that Boniface had entered another action against him, in consequence of unguarded expressions, of conspiracy to ruin him in trade. The case created a great sensation in the county. Clasp was a made man; and Cornish crept away with his Irish friend to a distant part of the country, until the storm should blow over.

CHAPTER L.

IN WHICH THERE IS MUCH PHILOSOPHY ON MARRIAGE, AND AN UNCOMFORTABLE SWIM BY STAR-LIGHT.

THE *Thames* soon executed her orders; but owing to the admiral having no ship at the Cape, the *Thames* was ordered on to Madras. This prolonged separation afforded the doctor sufficient scope for his railing against marriage; and even Bowling began to think he had done a hasty thing, although his love was as fierce as ever, perhaps, indeed, a little warmer from his provoking absence, when nothing could be done at sea; and a cruise ashore, and vegetable diet, might be useful and beneficial.

The doctor never let an opportunity slip of commenting upon the folly and inconsistency of marriages so hastily formed, and which, when carried into effect by people of the same age, were seldom productive of happiness.

'If I were First Lord of the Admiralty,' said he, 'I would never employ a married man;—no officer on service should be married to anything but his ship.'

'Doctor, you have told me so a dozen times. I'm married now, and cannot be unmarried.'

'More's the pity—you would make a splendid admiral; but all admirals get wives, and then they look after the cottage on shore more than the cabin afloat.'

'What think you of Nelson?'

'Why he is the best man to prove my position.'

'And Collingwood?'

'Exceptions prove the rule.'

'You will be married yourself, doctor, before long. I never heard a man who was so fierce against the sin of matrimony who did not commit it.'

'I should just as soon think of taking a cobra capello, without drawing his swivel teeth, for a pet, as a woman for an everlasting companion;—do you ever get a chance of saying a word, or is it not always a one-sided argument?'

'Bless you, doctor!' said Bowling, as his heart was warmed with the question, 'if she were to speak for a week I should consider it too short a time, and ask her to go on for a fortnight. Why, I live upon her words!'

'Very bad food for nourishment, rely upon it—neither farinaceous nor fattening—those who talk much seldom talk well. A jaw-me-dead in a man is detestable, and in a woman insupportable.'

'Come, doctor, as we play this game, tell me what has made you such an enemy to the sex? None but the brave deserve the fair—if so, you merit the fairest that ever was born.'

'I'm afraid, sir, Miss Susan taught you how to say pretty things, as well as your prayers; but I will tell you why I call out against officers marrying.'

'Go on, doctor—move first—you won the last game.'

'When I was about twenty-five, I made a fool of myself in earnest; I had been many times before a considerable donkey, but then I really made an ass of myself. I made a woman an offer.'

'And she refused you, and thus soured your temper in that respect.'

'Not so, sir; she accepted me, and I was to do penance for a year; at the expiration of that time, if I was of the same mind, we were to be made happy, as poets and paragraphs in the papers assert. Away I went to sea—love-sick, moping about the deck like a squeamish passenger, doing nothing myself, and hindering everyone else from being employed. The captain had been made happy ten years before, and miserable ever since. Whenever he was at sea, he grew lively and cheerful; but as we got into the latitude of 49° 57′, and began to look out for the Lizard, then he began to grow as cloudy as a November morning in London—all his spirits evaporated. And when the man at the mast-head called out "Land on the lee-bow!" and everyone of us nearly jumped sky-high at the thought of getting into an English anchorage, it was as good as three dozen to him if he got in the report between that and our sailing again. The fact was, the captain would as soon have seen the devil as his wife. He had three children, to whom he was much attached, and whom his wife seemed to detest as much as himself. We were cruising in the bay—(you cannot move the knight, it discovers check)—when a strange sail was discovered; we chased gallantly enough, and the vessel succeeded in getting into the Garonne; but as we hauled off, giving up that chase, we saw a convoy of chasse marées creeping along the coast. Away we went after them (check to the king and castle). No sooner did they see us, than they all huddled together under a small fort; and we stood in well within gun-shot, which being intimated to us by the arrival of one of those iron messengers of

war on board, we tacked and stood out again.

'Every one began to wonder what was to be done; the first lieutenant suggested the boats; the master said he knew the coast well, and that there was ample water for the frigate close to the fort, which was a miserable concern, and which could not stand against the frigate five minutes. The captain was poor, the prize tempting, if they could be brought out, but useless to him if they were to be destroyed. Then came the balance of chances against certainty of success; such as, when unmarried, you never thought of at Martinique; then came the fear of being killed, and of leaving three children to a mother that hated them; and the fear of being wounded and sent on shore, there to be tenderly nursed by a wife who would have tormented his soul out, and made death preferable to a life of everlasting annoyance. It was a struggle between cupidity and prudence; and prudence won the battle, and we made sail without attempting to destroy one of the thirty-four vessels well within our power. That's the reason why I never liked married captains, who are looking after their children and not after the enemy's vessels; we might have had as pretty a morning's entertainment with that battery as I could have wished. And a few French soldiers who came down to the fort would no doubt have kept us alive if we had attempted to land.'

'But doctor,' said Bowling, 'I have read that a man, when he marries, becomes more attached to his country, and a better subject.'

'That is, if he is attached to his wife, and lives on shore. If he is desperately in love, he keeps out of danger for fear of an accident; if he is not, he will not make prize-money, lest his wife should expect a new bonnet.'

In this manner the evenings passed. The doctor and the captain always played at chess; and whenever the captain spoke of the joys of returning home, the doctor turned Job's comforter, and related about a dozen instances in which that joy had been blighted for a moment, on the discovery that the wife had walked off with some one else during the husband's absence. He was prolific of anecdotes, all tending to discourage matrimony, and to show the blessings of liberty.

'Why, sir,' said he, 'ever since you married I consider myself a better, because I am a freer man. I ride at single anchor; you are moored. I start when I like; you must veer away upon the small bower-cable of your wife's, before you can heave in the best bower of your own wishes. And then you see, sometimes a squall comes on; the small bower parts; and away you go to sea, with the cable sticking out of your hawse-hole, but no arms and crown to the anchor to check you (Solomon says a good wife is a *crown* to a husband), or bring you up hard and fast on the good holding-ground of marriage.' In this manner did the doctor take a delight in tormenting his captain, and at the same time continuing his game of chess, which he almost invariably won.

Madras roads were soon left without a ship. The *Thames* was on her voyage to England, and every stitch of canvas was crowded to get home. It was evening—one of those delightful evenings when the stars appear to have come down from their high situations, and to have neared the earth. The ship was going at the rate of eight knots, and every heart seemed rejoicing at the return to England. On the forecastle the usual group of seamen had assembled; the rough-looking tar, with a voice as deep as the Atlantic, sang the old and favourite song, 'To England when with favouring gale,' whilst all around joined in the chorus which announced the 'soundings' gained, as the ship, under the pilot's charge, neared her harbour. It must be a sailor, for none but sailors are accustomed to the sound, to estimate the correct notes as the leadsman calls 'By the mark seven;' and the man who set the song to music has so beautifully transferred to music the rough notes of the sailor, that any one might believe, as the song was sung, that it was in reality a man in the chains calling out the soundings. That has ever been, and ever will be, a favourite song; and no sooner is it ended than all the sailors, who look forward to an hour's liberty after years of prison ship discipline, make their remarks thus:—

'Well sung, Tom! I'm blessed if I don't see the guard-ship at Spithead, and the bumboat woman with her soft tack' (fresh bread) 'before me now.'

'How we will spin up Channel, my lads,' said another, 'when the girls get hold of the hawser, and tow her along!'

'I shall see little Fanny again,' said another, a shade more sentimental than the Caliban who loved the whole sex.

'What a lark we will have at the Jolly Tar!' said another.

Whilst another, on whom the chorus of the song still seemed like inspiration, called out, 'By the-e mark seven!' The flying jib was at this time hauled down, and ordered to be stowed. Green, who, for once in his life, was willing to do the duty of another, volunteered, with one of the forecastle men, to go out and stow the flying jib, leaving the group to continue their songs.

By some accident Green, who was never very active, slipped overboard. The forecastle man, who had just turned round to speak to him, saw the accident, and called out, loud enough to be heard at the taffrail, 'A man overboard!' A hundred eyes were instantly on the alert to catch sight of the unfortunate man; and as the ship rounded

to on the starboard tack, Neptune's barber was seen on the weather quarter. The doctor and the captain were at their usual chess; but as the sounds reached them, all respect on one hand, and courtesy on the other, was forgotten in the hurry to rush on deck.

'A man can't be drowned such a night as this,' said the doctor.

'There he is, sir.'

'Lower the quarter boat.'

'Is that fore-mast tackle clear?'

'Cut away the gripes.'

'Lower away abaft!'

It was a glorious confusion. The best-disciplined ship in the navy cannot be kept in order under such excitement.

'There's another man overboard,' said one of the youngsters; but his voice was scarcely audible. In the meantime, the first man was lost sight of; and it having been ascertained that he fell from the flying jib-boom, it was presumed the frigate passed over him, and that, although every exertion was made, yet it was fruitless. The second man, who leaped overboard, had previously thrown a grating, and this he pushed before him, whilst he struck out vigorously in the direction he imagined Green to be; and Green, who swam pretty well, called out lustily, the sound of his voice being heard by him who came to his rescue. Still, although enabled to keep above water, the poor fellow was fast failing. He had been forced pretty well under water, and kept there some time previous to his rising clear of the ship.

'Quick, quick!' he exclaimed, 'or I must sink!'

'Courage, courage, my lad!' cried the advancing man. 'Keep up your spirits; here's a grating, and the boat's coming. Who are you?'

'William Green,' said the man.

'The devil you are!' cried the doctor, checking the grating, which was close to the man. 'You and I have an account to square, and I think I'll give you time to wash the lather off your face.'

'Oh, sir! for God's sake, help! I'm sinking; I am!'

The doctor saw that Green was more frightened than hurt, and judged from his exertions that he was capable of much more. He indulged him with a few remarks upon his tyranny, and added that he was afraid he must keep the grating for himself, as it would only carry one, and that he, the doctor, was of more value on board than a skulking gentleman subject to fits.

At last, however, Green began to show evident symptoms of being done up, and the doctor pushed him the grating, on which he managed to float with considerable difficulty, although he was quite aware, from the security he felt, that he could hold on a quarter of an hour, if requisite: for, to a swimmer, there is nothing more easy to manage than a grating. The doctor kept close to him, never venturing too near what he considered a drowning man, but one who had again deceived him; for Green, a cowardly fellow by nature, had pretended more exhaustion than he experienced, and, having got upon the grating, was resolved to keep there.

In the meantime the boat had left the ship, and, with the desperate eagerness of sailors who strive to save a shipmate, pulled with all their hearts and souls to the rescue. But they were going far away from the place; the wind was pretty fresh; the noise of the water, with the encouraging yell of the sailors, completely drowned the cries of the doctor; and those of Green, whose lungs were in excellent order, were alike unheard. To the great dismay of both, the boat, on arriving at what they believed the distance the men should be, made a sweep in a contrary direction, and then went fairly out of sight and hearing, even had it been a calm.

'This is but bad work, Green,' observed the doctor, 'and that blue light which the ship now burns may be the last we shall ever see. I am getting rather tired; the grating will bear us both up, if we keep cool.'

'If you come near it,' cried Green, the fear of death at once overcoming all the restraint of discipline, 'I'll drown you.'

'Then we must have a fight for it,' said the doctor; 'and I warn you that if I am successful you may drown without my assistance.' The doctor was not a man to threaten without putting the threat into execution. The possession of the grating was the forlorn hope, the straw at which drowning men catch, and clutch as if it would save them from the gaping grave beneath. Green had placed the grating under him, and was lying on it, perfectly restored from his first fatigue. The doctor, who had generously risked his life for the worthless cur, was strong enough in heart to fight for the only chance left of salvation, and he struck out for the affray. Green endeavoured to stop him by splashing the water in his face as he advanced, and many a swimmer has found how efficacious a mode it is of repelling an adversary; but the doctor was not to be kept back by some drops of water. He seized the grating, and felt at the same moment the fearful clutch of Green, who seized his hair. A moment's thought convinced the doctor both were lost if he persevered; for Green would, in losing the grating, have clung to him, and both must have sunk. He therefore only rested his hands upon the grating; and in this manner both, believing their death inevitable, retained their holds.

The boat's crew were not easily turned from their object. They made a circle in the proper direction, and when they came,

even at the last moment, to the assistance of their comrades, Green would not release his hold of the doctor's hair, fearing that he might slip from the grating and be drowned. Both, perfectly exhausted, were lifted into the boat, and rescued; but even the shout, the cheers that welcomed the doctor's return, were unheard, for he had fainted from the fatigue.

CHAPTER LI.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT ALL BALLS ARE NOT FRIENDLY RENCONTRES, AND THAT THE GRAPE IS HARD TO SWALLOW.

SINCE Mr. Harrison had heard of his son's existence, he had, if anything, passed a more wretched time than when he was in uncertainty. Fate seemed resolved to torment him; the evidence of the German doctor and the attorney was sufficient, with the production of Hanson's last will, to satisfy the doubting mind of even the mother. And when this was done, and the *Thames* had sailed for India, the two worthy companions drove their gig up to town; the former amusing everyone by his good humour, and the numerous mistakes he occasioned, and the latter wonderfully the better for Mrs. Talbot's hospitality. Bowling's letter intimating his departure, in which not a word was mentioned of Susan's, which was about this time at Gibraltar, convinced her that her husband had sailed without knowing one word of the mystery he most wished to have unravelled.

It was impossible for any man to have welcomed a daughter-in-law with more rapture than did Harrison his son's wife. In Susan he saw every perfection and beauty; and the man who before in his grief had lived the life of retirement, now shared in every amusement, and lavished money upon Susan with a liberality that seemed exhaustless. Few indeed were her wants; the hospitality of Mrs. Talbot was ample for her; but the drawing her mother-in-law from the seclusion she had so long practised gave her sufficient employment. Harrison himself soon grew friendly with the world; but his wife, suffering under that most painful infirmity, deafness, and having so long lived retired, seemed to have fallen into the nervous timidity of a child, and still loved seclusion more than the cheerful companionship of her daughter-in-law.

At this time the country was as dull as even Mr. Harrison a short time back could have desired. The departure of the German doctor and deferential attorney had left Mrs. Talbot's house apparently far more dreary than it was before. The night looks darker when the flash of lightning has illuminated it for a second.

Cornish and the wild Irish gentleman had departed after the trial; and the conversation at the church-porch after service of an intended ball seemed one of the only occasions for some conversation and a little hope. The rector, Mrs. Talbot, and Susan, resolved to go. It was a charity ball; and therefore it was concluded by the most strait-laced that their going was excusable, if not unobjectionable. Tickets were five shillings, tea included; and the whole county seemed desirous of getting a little exercise and some amusement at this trifling charge.

Susan knew that the rector was about to propose a union between himself and the widow, and she saw that her friend would not be so hard-hearted as to be likely to cause the good-natured man the least pain. That was a marriage in perspective, which was most industriously circulated as a profound secret;—no one was to tell it to his neighbour until it was discovered that the clerk, the bell-ringer, the sexton, and the whole parish, talked of it always as a secret every one knew, and no one betrayed. The ball was to come first, and at it Mr. Harrison was easily persuaded to attend, although, till very recently, for twenty-two years he had never indulged in the charms of society. And on this occasion the rector assured him that a cheerful countenance, and a modest participation in the pleasures of the world, were more acceptable to the Father of the fatherless than a sad and sullen demeanour, which appeared to groan under the dispensations of Providence, unreconciled to its will.

When the first country-dance was played, every lady seemed anxious to maintain her rank; and there was a little difficulty in reconciling all to their several places. The master of the ceremonies knew the exact relationship to any peerage or baronetage enjoyed by the different spinsters, and the grade of each officer in the army and navy who had left his widow, wife, or daughter, to adorn a county ball. But he was sadly puzzled when he saw a bustling, vulgar-looking, though pretty woman, placing herself, in spite of some delicate opposition amongst those whose places were as well known as the mile-stones. Susan stood up; her rank was readily accorded her. And next to her came the bustling busybody.

'Here we is has near has needs be!' said the lady, who might have been indulging in the juice of the grape. 'Step a little lower down, if you please, miss;—make way, Guardo! don't you see a stationer a coming, as my husband says?'

She had no necessity for appealing to either side of her; her opening discourse soon procured her room enough. Those above took a step and a half to the left, and those to the right descended half a pace. The gentleman

who danced with the lady one below her maintained his place, and would not give way an inch; whilst a lady close by, observing the forward manner of the *lady*, requested the master of the ceremonies to make her acquainted with her proper situation.

There was a little confusion concerning this interloper; but it was evident she was not to be unshipped by any master of the ceremonies.

In the meantime the lady, having fought her own battles, was now busily employed fighting those of her partner.

'Vhy don't you stand hopposite to me, you odmigog, you! Lawks me! if my husband vas honly a dancing with me, he'd take his place as he did Martinique!'

Susan hearing this, and believing some honour and glory belonged to her husband for that deed, looked round rather briskly; when, to her indescribable annoyance, she was thus saluted:—

'Why my!—if it isn't Susan Monckton, has I'm alive! Well, miss, you do look as pretty as ever! And how's your lover—that Captain Cornish?—ay, he was a sly one; many's the wink he gave me when he was a gulling you, as my husband says. Lord love you! those soldiers tell more lies in a day when they are a courting, than a sailor tells in a year, when he's a love-making. Oh, here's my 'usband! There, Watson, there's Susan Monckton!'

Often enough had Betsy Weller, the former lady's-maid of Rosa Talbot, talked to her husband *now* of the beauty of Susan, and with that eye of admiration which, thank God, most sailors possess for the beautiful, in whatsoever country it may exist, Watson turned to look upon the girl to whom he had been so unceremoniously introduced. Susan, willing to avoid this Caliban, who had evidently taken in his provisions and wine for a twelve hours' cruise, made a dignified courtesy as she answered that her name was Bowling, and that she was the wife of Captain Bowling of the navy.

'Wife of Tom Bowling!' cried Watson. 'Tip us your flipper!—I've been a messmate and a shipmate with Tom Bowling. And many's the time we've drunk the health of black-eyed Susan, as he used to sing; let's see, ay, the last line was, "Believe me, dear Susan, I'll come back again." Don't you go capering down this room like a Spanish horse at a short canter, but come alongside of me, and I'll tell you how Tom and I swam ashore at Martinique; how we scaled the fort, pitched the Crapeaux over the parapets, and gave them a swim in a herring-pond they never much liked.'

Quite in vain did Mrs. Bowling decline the honour of listening to the glorious achievements even of her husband. The whole room were attracted by the boisterous manner of Watson, who was in uniform, and consequently most generally observed by the ladies.

'Oh my!' said the forward Betsy Watson, who never had forgiven the pretty Susan for her sudden discharge from Rosa's service, although that discharge had been the cause of her marriage, 'what, married another?—how that Cornish must grin to be sure! That's about the third, as I know, that he's passed off. Well, it's very lucky; and I says nothing, nothing but this, that there's many a man what goes to market and buys stale vegetables for fresh ones. It's no business of mine, so mum's the word.'

This insolent remark, and the well-known character of Cornish, excited some whispers, all loud enough to be heard; for when scandal *whispers*, she whispers through a speaking trumpet. Harrison heard more than one which seemed to convey this kind of idea: 'A fortunate occurrence is a well-timed marriage.' 'There's no smoke without fire.' And Susan could not but understand the malicious slander of this worthless woman, who had carefully nursed her revenge against the most innocent creature alive. Susan went instantly to Mrs. Talbot, who was at that moment so engaged in conversation that, for the first time in her life, she did not rejoice at hearing Susan's voice. The rector also, who wore a more earnest countenance, gave a look which clearly indicated his wish.

'Why, there's that Missus Talbot!' said Mrs. Watson, 'as fine as a peacock. That's all false hair—every curl of it; for when her wig's off, she's as bald as my hand!'

Mrs. Talbot heard not this blight upon her head; but on Mrs. Watson being pointed out to her, and having heard the insolent remark, she desired the rector to communicate to the master of the ceremonies that the intruder was her former maid, dismissed from her service for impertinence and slander.

'Very sorry to hear it,' said Mr. Tiptoes, 'but I cannot interfere. She is the wife of a lieutenant in the navy, and was mentioned by Captain Cornish to me yesterday, just before he went to London, as an amiable young woman, occupying a good position in life.'

'Then, as I do not choose to be in the same society as that of my maid,' said Mrs. Talbot, 'I shall instantly retire. Have the kindness to order my carriage.'

'All pleasure preconceived or preconcerted,' says Johnson, 'ends in disappointment,' and so it proved, first, as to going to the ball, and secondly, in getting away from it. The comforts of a country ball are somewhat counterbalanced by the distance one has to go, and the fatigue of returning. Mrs. Talbot's servant, believing that he should not be wanted until one o'clock, had betaken himself to some obscure public-

house, with the proprietor of which he was acquainted. And one hour elapsed before he was ready.

In the meantime, Watson, who was a cloth or two on the wind, but who yet could carry his canvas without reeling under it, would not leave the wife of his old friend and commander; and his was the warm and generous feeling of a sailor towards what he called a ship which had parted from her convoy, and might get out of her reckoning. Harrison could not understand the acquaintance, and perhaps was a little more puzzled owing to his long absence from the world, when he heard Watson ask Susan, in reference to him, 'What *galoot* that was?' Mrs. Watson, having taken a little revenge, took a dance. She was a pretty woman, with what sailors call a larking countenance. She had large dark eyes, very lively in their glance, and very comprehensive in their meaning. She was therefore no wall-flower; the young men all preferring that careless abandonment of manner to the distant coldness, the aristocratic reserve, of less talkative partners.

Every one in the room knew Cornish, both by acquaintance and by character, so that Mrs. Watson's insinuations against poor Susan obtained some credit, more especially as the fields and the lanes were so accurately described that they gave a semblance of truth to the scandal; besides which, Mrs. Watson could have no reason for such assertions.

'Ay!' said the artful woman, rubbing up a little sentiment, 'it ain't all gold as glitters; your violet is not so modest, though it grows in concealment, but what a wasp will find it out; and if you clap a peacock's head and tail on the cuckoo, it would look mighty fine until it was plucked.' Her quaint manner, the volubility of her words, and the excessive jumble of vulgarity and fag ends of old sentiments, rather amused than charmed her partners.

'Short and sweet!' she said to her partner, as the country-dance finished, which had kept the fiddlers at work for an hour. 'It's a long lane that's got no turning; little said is soon mended; short horse is easy carried; small potatoes fill a sack; and one jay chatters more than forty sparrows. Well, I should *just* like to know what my husband is poking about there with that fortunate woman, Mrs. Bowling! As I'm alive, he's giving her his arm!'

It was all true. Watson, who considered it his duty to attend on a shipmate's wife, and who would have fought forty battles in such a holy cause, heard Mrs. Talbot's carriage announced, and saw Harrison come forward to offer his assistance.

'I ask your pardon, old gentleman,' said Watson, meaning to be very polite, 'but you need not shove your oar in where there is no rowlock. A messmate before a shipmate, you know; a shipmate before a stranger; a stranger before a dog; and a dog before a marine. Hook on, Mrs. Bowling! The commodore's a long way ahead:' and Susan, rather than make a scene, took the proffered arm and walked through the room; but as she came near the door, Mrs. Watson begged to interfere.

'Come, Watson,' said the impudent jade, 'none of your cruising, as you say, where you're not stationed. Don't you be trying, with your old grey noddle, to cut out my friend, Captain Cornish.' But Watson passed on, and, having placed her in the carriage, gave the rector a lift in; but when Harrison offered himself, he put his arm across the door: 'Avaust heaving, old gentleman! Never more than eight in a mess, you know, and one in a hammock. The hold's full, and there's no more stowage.'

'Come in, Mr. Harrison,' said Susan, anxious to leave the hated house.

'I'll strike him down below,' said Watson, alluding to the stowage of a water-cask on board a ship. 'He'll do well enough for a ground-tier butt; or you may make shifting ballast of him, if the ship sails too much by the head. Good-night, Mrs. Bowling! Tell your gallant husband that I've been across your hawse; and that old Watson drinks his health, and success to the heroes of Martinique, every night in old Jamaica. Come, you chap in the fore-top' (alluding to the coachman), 'make sail, and mind your steerage through the town; and don't get yawing about, like a brig in a high sea! There! starboard a little; and take care of the beacon!

'Why, I'm blessed,' added the rough sailor, as he watched the course of the vehicle, 'if he has not run his own figure-head right against the swinging-sign. Port, hard, old boy! You'll be foul of that craft on the starboard bow. You had better heave all aback, and get a pilot on board; for I suspect you've been splicing the main-brace once or twice. Slap on board of him, by the Lord Harry! Mind your weather helm, you lubberly scoundrel! There goes the bowsprit end smack into the after cabin! Pooped, by Jove! and one of the after-guard knocked over the quarter-gallery!'

The coachman was drunk; and in endeavouring to get clear of the carriages he had run against one, whilst another before him suddenly backed, which brought the pole of Mrs. Talbot's carriage in contact with the footman's legs (Watson called the footman 'the after-guard'), who, to save himself, jumped over the hinder wheel. This is the interpretation of Watson's remarks, for the benefit of those not conversant in nautical phraseology.

Susan had borne up against the infliction of her new acquaintance with all the spirit

she could muster; but the fright coming before she could recover herself, and her ears still catching the jargon of Watson—who, poor fellow, did all with the best possible intention, although not in the most elegant manner—she fainted. The coachman got clear of the crowd, and then in reality followed Watson's directions; for he made all sail, and drove furiously home, lodging the whole party in a comfortable ditch, just below the cottage which Susan had converted into a school.

'Now, old gentleman!' said Mrs. Watson, as her husband returned, 'I'm quits with those creatures; and so I'm contented to go on to Mount's Bay to-morrow. But who'd a thought of such an old fool as you running and gallivanting after the girls? Oh fie, Mr. Watson! fie for shame of you! Come along home! Good-night to you, Mr. What-do-you-call-yourself! Oh fie! fie! fie!'

CHAPTER LII.

'Poor child of danger! nursling of the storm!
Sad are the woes that wreck thy manly form!
Rocks, waves, and winds the shattered barque delay;
Thy heart is sad, thy home is far away!'
CAMPBELL.

THE doctor, who to the last, for all he knew, died fighting, slowly recovered by the active treatment recommended by his assistant, who looked upon his recovery as disgustingly certain. A death vacancy is a very comfortable space, soon filled up; but in this case, not even an expectant assistant-surgeon, remarkably sanguine men in general, could hope for such a desirable end. No sooner was he well than he remembered the kind intentions of Green to drown him rather than hazard, in the slightest degree, his own life. 'I'll settle that with him,' he said, 'when the ship's paid off.'

As the *Thames* drew nearer to England, a universal excitement prevailed. For a wonder, it was still peace. The two most quarrelsome nations in the world were taking breath before they went in for a finish. John Bull was mustering up his giant resources, whilst John Crapeaux was looking out for a good opportunity of hopping into the water.

'Well, master,' said Bowling, rubbing his hands, 'what do you make the latitude?'

'Forty-eight fifty-six, sir.'

'Only sixty miles from the Lizard, doctor,' he continued. 'The breeze is fair, although it is light; and by sunset we may yet make the land, or see the light before eleven. Blow, blow, my good breeze!' and Bowling, following an old superstition of sailors, began to whistle for a wind.

The doctor was in high spirits also. He had had enough of sailing about the world, doing nothing but physicking the sick and plaistering the wounded. There had been no pleasurable excitement in the way of amputations; and he seriously intended to cut the concern altogether, without more active operations were pursued. He hated the very word 'peace;' he declared England could never repose for a moment whilst Napoleon existed; and oftentimes read, with the eye of prophecy, the forthcoming events, as Collingwood actually predicted the very plan for the co-operation of the French and Spanish fleets which the Emperor contemplated, and which he afterwards attempted to carry into effect. Collingwood's remarkable letter is equal to any foretold event on record.

The wind grew lighter as the sun went down. The seamen sang their songs with more than usual glee, and a little grog made the notes of each voice a little deeper and a little merrier.

'Poor child of danger! nursling of the storm!' Such indeed is the thoughtless, fearless sailor. To him no thought of poverty in age ever occurs; the present hour alone is made for him. The experience of the past vanishes with the event; and futurity, or the stormy, lowering evening of life, when man becomes as helpless as in infancy, never occupies his thoughts or disturbs his repose. His existence is bounded by to-morrow. He sees no further than the termination of his cruise, and all plans for his existence extend but to that duration. He has no golden visions to cheer the decline of life, Greenwich alone excepted; and his text and his motto may be summed up in the scriptural command, 'Sufficient for the day be the evil thereof.'

Now, for a moment, all was excitement, attended with many a bright ray of hope for pleasure to come; but who could imagine human nature to be so little ambitious as to figure pleasure in so humble a garb? For the chief enjoyment to which the men looked forward was a dance at the back of Point or Common Hard—a glorious jollification, in which the participators or originators were alike degraded. Money was a dross; the hard-earned wages of years would be dissipated in a night; and he who had combated the storms, and stood boldly against his country's foes, would awake from the heavy sleep of intoxication, a pauper and a fool, again to toil and to toil until age rendered him unfit for the service: and a grateful country would place him in the stocks or confine him in a gaol for a violation of the Vagrant Act. Such *was* the sailor's life, and such were his prospects. A better spirit has been infused; and now they are more reasonable beings, and more tractable men.

It is not always calm in the Chops of the Channel. A gale comes on as suddenly as a cloud seems to form. The *Thames* was

within forty miles of the Lizard Light, and at ten o'clock all hands seemed asleep but the look-out men. By midnight a pretty strong breeze had got up; the officer of the first watch was too lazy to reef at the first indication of the coming gale, but he waited until twelve o'clock, when he would have the assistance of the watch below, and have some employment to pass away the half-hour, which he generally found the longest in his watch, between the expiration of his proper time and his relief.

The wind began to whistle loudly from the westward, and the *Thames* stood up Channel with a slapping breeze, intending to pass within sight of the Lizard Light, and to be well up to the Eddystone before noon. The ship was made snug aloft, at least so as to run free with all security; but after running about two hours, the weather became so thick and squally that prudence dictated another course, which was to heave to, and, as a great example did before them, 'wish for day.'

When the ship came to the wind it was requisite to close reef, to get the top-gallant-yards on deck, and strike the masts. The wind increased in loud, sudden squalls, and before daylight the *Thames* was under her close-reefed main-topsail, fore and main stay-sails. The fog thickened, and, by way of a little souvenir of the climate, a considerable fall of snow came on. Daylight came, but it might just as well have kept away. The snow fell so thickly that it was impossible to see a mile in any direction; and as in those times chronometers were not brought to their present perfection, and navigation by no means so generally understood, the situation of the frigate became a little unpleasant. But no pen can convey an idea of the annoyance a seaman experiences when he has a fair wind close to his harbour, and dare not avail himself of it.

In spite of the snow, a vigilant look-out was kept; and all that day the fog remained, as the sailors remarked, thick enough to be eaten with a spoon. Bowling began to feel very uneasy, for he fancied the motion of the ship was not as regular as it had been; and that every now and then she made a kind of double lurch, as if the sea had rebounded from the shore, to which he believed himself near. They had made no land for thousands of miles, and the soundings alone were now their guide.

It is certainly true that so well has that high road of commercial intercourse, the English Channel, been surveyed and sounded, that there is not apparently one foot which has not been visited by the lead-line. The variation of the colour of the sand—the mixture of small shells—the deviation into mud—a harder and more consistent soil, mark the approach to the coast, or a further ingress to the Channel. The master was confident; and yet in his confidence was very prone to look over the charts and measure distances. Here and there he saw sand and fine shells, with a corresponding depth of water; but this sand and fine shells extended some distance to sea, and yet came close to the land. The latitude convinced him pretty well of his situation, and yet he was evidently ill at ease.

There seemed a rather general disposition on board to consider themselves much nearer Mount Bay than their wished-for haven at Spithead; and the only man who did not seem to care one straw for any danger and difficulty was the man who knew less about the concern than his messmates—the doctor. It was all the same to him as long as there was a little danger; a calm in life he abhorred; and everything coming exactly as it was anticipated was rather a bore than otherwise.

The wind before daylight suddenly shifted, and blew home to the English shore. The fog began to clear away, and the morning broke, showing to Bowling and the master that they had committed a great error in believing that they could escape at discretion, even if they found themselves within half a mile of the land. The sudden shifting of the wind made Mount Bay a lee shore; and they found the frigate drifting right in, with a cross-sea running high, the wind extremely boisterous, and the situation very dangerous.

It was now the time for the good seaman to show himself. And when the *Thames* was placed under her reefed courses and close-reefed topsails, with a try-sail and a fore-stay-sail, it became evident, in spite of all the seamanship in the world, that the ship could not weather either point of the bay sufficiently far to clear the other land. There was now no time to be lost—a shipwreck stared them in the face; for a small merchant brig was seen a little on their lee quarter, vainly endeavouring to strive against her fate by means of her canvas.

The cables had been bent the day previous; and now every anchor was got ready. There was a companion in danger; the poor brig had not the power of the frigate, and she soon fell to leeward; still, however, struggling against her inevitable fate, and clinging to the last chance as firmly as Green clung to the doctor's unfortunate head.

Although not the slightest inattention was committed on board the *Thames*, yet officers and men both seemed to regard the fate of the brig more than the dangers which surrounded them; whilst it was more than probable that the brig would be, if wrecked, in a better position than the frigate, for which vessel, if the wind continued, only one chance existed, and that was in her anchors. The brig would be wrecked by daylight—then assistance is ever at hand; and there are willing hands and brave hearts to come to the rescue; but in the darkness of night,

when the cold wind blows, and rain falls in torrents, or the biting frost checks the warmest feeling, then some, not induced by plunder, or the chance of gain, which ever attends a wreck by daylight, creep to their beds and sleep in security, whilst the hapless seaman is struggling in the jaws of death, and vainly crying for assistance. There is many a man who would run any risk in fair weather, who is checked by a cold wind and a piercing sleet.

The brig had to go through all the manœuvres which the frigate contemplated. She drifted further and further to leeward, whilst the *Thames*, having vainly attempted to tack, had wore short round, and had more time to look the danger in the face. All hope was gone. The brig drifted into the bay; the sea pitched her about like a plaything; and the spray flew over her broad bow as it effectually stopped her way. She was now about to try her last resource; and Bowling took this opportunity of directing his crew's attention to the scene before them.

'Everything,' he said, 'must be no sooner ordered than done; the sails must be handed quicker than if an admiral and a whole fleet were spectators of a frigate coming into harbour. The anchors must be let go the instant the word is given; and we must be careful not to let the apparent danger force us into confusion; courage, coolness, and activity, may save us from that fate.'

It was now about four in the afternoon; and with the same eyes that a man on a platform sees his friend executed, and knows he is to follow, did the crew of the *Thames* watch the last struggle of the brig. She clewed up her sails with some degree of despatch; but she had only men enough to attempt to furl one at a time; her anchors were let go. Those emblems of hope, which seemed now thrown for ever from the vessel, performed their required services, and the vessel came head to wind; but it was but for a moment. The maintopsail was yet unfurled; the breeze freshened in a squall; and those on board the frigate who watched the brig with all the fear of men who see their own fate pictured before them, observed her drag her anchors, fall broadside to the wind, and drift away towards the shore, over which the breakers threw their white spray.

'She's ashore! she's gone!' was heard from many of the anxious spectators, while fear caught the sound and repeated the cry in accents of despair.

It was a moment of intense anxiety; but the worst was soon over. It was evident that the brig must have parted her cables, for the fore stay-sail was run up, and the vessel, bow on to the shore, was steered to her destruction.—(It is always better to go end on, than broadside on; the vessel will hold together longer; and if the beach is steep too, the crew may be saved from the bowsprit end.) The last flickering of hope was extinguished; every man, regardless of his own danger, fixed his eye upon the devoted vessel; she seemed rising upon a higher sea; and her stern was scarcely above the breaking wave which foamed and roared as it bore her onwards to the rocks. At last she struck; the mainmast fell at the first shock; and this announcement that the work of death and destruction had begun, was acknowledged by one general burst of uncontrolled feeling on board the frigate. Sea after sea now tumbled upon her. The foremast fell in about five minutes after she struck; and she was now a certain wreck, breaking up more and more as the heavy seas rolled in.

It was not every man who could look with unblanched cheek at this scene; and yet it appeared to make no impression upon Bowling, save that of pity for the sufferers.

'Nice work for the wreckers,' said the doctor, with provoking coolness, 'and very unsatisfactory, I should say, for the underwriters; as for the owners, they gain, of course. Such a bluff-bowed monster must be insured to the full amount.'

The purser, a careful man, and one who had the unenviable reputation of being able to make dead men chew tobacco, got his books together and tied them under his coat. He never threw a chance away, and was well aware how profitable the wreck of the frigate would be to him if plenty were drowned; but being a very considerable rogue, he had some qualms of conscience. So, having shut himself up in his cabin, and having insured as much as he could his worldly interest, he now betook himself to his prayers, and endeavoured to recollect some which, having been long disused, had almost faded from his memory.

The master, a stern old weather-beaten tar, had, during his life of danger, experienced many a hair-breadth escape in the battle and the breeze, and therefore could not believe his time come, although a fearful example was before his eyes.

The first-lieutenant was busily employed in enforcing order, whilst the rest of the officers being occupied in seeing some work done, were kept with their minds engaged so actively, that they had no time to be frightened.

'Well, master,' said Bowling, as he took the former to the taffrail, 'this is a nice business—what do you think of the result?'

'Trust in God, and the Spanish cable, sir; we shall get through it yet.'

'How is the holding ground here?'

'Not very famous for that, sir; but vessels have ridden out gales without being lost.'

'What, blowing as hard as it is now?

'Hard enough, sir, to blow the boatswain over the taffrail.'

'We cannot keep off all night—we shall drift down to where the brig anchored about eight o'clock!'

'More's the pity, sir, but what can't be cured must be endured; we shan't be wrecked I know from any accident on board the vessel. I've stoppers enough to hold the Jamaica mountains, which disappeared one night. Keep her full, boy!—don't touch her. I think we might pick out a smooth place and stay here, sir—ready about, sir—'

'Hands about ship—look out now, master! Keep her rap full, quarter-master. Now, then, ease the helm gently down;—"Helm's a-lee!"—check the lee fore-brace a very little—that's it; she'll come round. "Main-sail haul"—which way does she go?'

'Falling off—all right, sir!'

'Haul, all!'

CHAPTER LIII.

IN WHICH THE READER IS INFORMED OF THE AUTHOR'S IDEA OF AN 'UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATION.'

'THAT'S pleasure deferred,' said the doctor, as the *Thames* once more stood across on the larboard tack. 'It's like a man dying of consumption, and eating soups and jellies. We must face it at last, and therefore the sooner the better.'

'Not exactly so,' replied Bowling. 'Not that I venture to dispute your medical position; but as we got into this uncomfortable situation from a change of wind, so we may get out of it again the same way. We have no tubercles on our livers, doctor; we have not begun to dry cough and spit blood. We have hope enough to cheer us, although that brig does look like a horrid beacon, showing us the best place on which to run the ship.'

'Hope!' cried the doctor. 'I have enough of that left to make a midshipman an admiral. No occasion to whistle for a wind now, sir!'

As the doctor made this remark a squall, of which there had been a hundred before, came on more violently than any of its predecessors. The main-tack gave way, and away flew the mainsail to leeward. Quick as the men were to the clue-garnet, it was too late; the first flap of the sail split it, and it blew literally to ribbons. The ship righted as this powerful sail was taken off her; her way decreased: she fell to leeward; and now there was nothing left for it but to anchor.

'Turn the hands up; furl sails,' cried the captain; and he gave his orders, as he calculated they had at least half an hour's drift to furl everything. 'Send down the top-gallant-mast on deck; and strike the lower-yards and topmasts.'

'If she does not ride easily, master, to her anchors, I would not hesitate one second, but cut away her lower masts, and let the hull ride it out.'

'We could do that better now, and let them fall to leeward. Once at anchor!—and that last resource is a dangerous one.'

The beautiful discipline of the *Thames* might now have been seen to admiration. The orders were promptly executed in spite of her rolling about, and by the time she had got into nine fathoms water she was in perfect readiness to meet the gale at anchor. The small-bower was let go first, and when the cable was checked she rode for a second head to wind. Then the best-bower and sheet-anchors were let go, and the cables veered away until nearly at the clinch. Several times she was checked during this manœuvre; and when she was finally stoppered she came to her proper position without a jerk, and rode as easily as a vessel could in such a tremendous sea.

Sad indeed was the prospect as the sun went down, red and fiery, and the dark, angry clouds settled on the horizon to windward. The cheerless night began to set in; the wind increased, the *Thames* pitching heavily at her anchors; one by one the lights of the town, as the inhabitants betook themselves to their comfortable beds, disappeared; and the high hill was scarcely visible in the gloom of the darkness. Far different were the anxious moments on board of the frigate. Men were in each main-chains with lead-lines in their hands, to ascertain if the ship drifted the least; and at every sea which came towering onwards, and sweeping the vessel from stem to stern, the same question was asked, 'Does she hold on?' Death seemed riding on every wave; on every blast came the demon of destruction. Fear had usurped the place of courage in many; scarcely an eye was closed; and the moon, as it appeared to fly through the clouds, only gave the wearied seamen a sight of the surf, which seemed roaring for another victim. The loud gusts of the wind, as it hoarsely sang through the shrouds, sounded sadly on ears ever accustomed to its noise; and the rain, as it fell in thin sleet, only fed the violence of the breeze.

The seamen had now, one by one, taken all the precautions against starvation on shore, forgetting that in England the purses of the benevolent are ever wide-mouthed in the cause of distress. Some carefully put into their pockets a few coins which they possessed; some put on their best clothes; and others, as if death were less horrible in drunkenness, endeavoured to drown their minds, and leave their senseless bodies to chance.

The first-lieutenant was, however, much too quick for these cowardly curs. Sentinels were placed over the after-hold; and although each man's life would have been rashly insured at half an hour's duration, these men kept

their posts with military exactness. One or two old seamen, who from their infancy had been cradled in a ship and rocked by the breeze, even now could sleep. They were men who had no ties to bind them to the shore, excepting those which, in the libertinage of their lives, had been allowed by law. Their affections were not upon any one object, and their hope never extended beyond the present time.

Amongst the officers a very different feeling prevailed. They were all sensible of the imminent danger; and all, excepting those whose duty occupied them, wrote letters for their parents or their sisters, and prepared themselves for death as they related the probable account of their loss.

Bowling had done all this; and in his last affectionate epistle to Susan, although resigned to his fate, he could not but deplore the few minutes which made the green spot in the oasis of his heart: those few moments had been spent in her society. His friend the doctor was instructed, if he survived, what to do. And when the captain, a little shaken by the thoughts which naturally arise in an affectionate breast, volunteered to be of equal service if he survived, to see the doctor's last wishes obeyed, he was answered, that as for friends he never was troubled by any of them, that he never had credit enough to be trusted in money affairs, and that the only debt of which he was aware was that one to the Irish gentleman, which the captain might discharge, and a slight account with Green, which he hoped to be able to settle himself.

Bowling endeavoured to wean him from these subjects by assuring him of his danger; but the doctor, as coolly as if on shore, answered, that he was quite aware that all Englishmen were only sure of two things, death and taxation; that he had looked the first so often in the face that he had grown familiar with it; and that as to the second, there was only one way of avoiding it, which was by a personal acquaintance with the former.

'To a married man,' said he, 'death appears horrible—there is the wife again! but to a single one, if he has no money, the case varies materially, as I can prove. I have cut up hundreds of dead men; I have handled them as often as an undertaker; and I assure you that the apprehension of death is greater in its horrors than the reality. If it was not for some feelings I have that point to a hereafter, I would die just as soon to-night as not.'

'And yet,' said Bowling, 'you must have some ties in Scotland—some early recollections—some associates of your youth, to whom you would send one message?'

'Nothing of the sort,' replied the imperturbable doctor. 'I have a recollection, and not a very comfortable one, of a schoolmaster; but as for the rest—I was caught. A brig came into Leith Roads, and drifted a jolly-boat astern, full of burgoo; I jumped in, with a dozen others, for a feed; they hauled the boat alongside, and thus made a haul of doctors, now liberally spread over the navy. I shall be happy to do anything for you if I survive, and that is unlikely; but as for myself, I have not one soul that I care about meeting, excepting always my Irish acquaintance.'

At this moment the man in the starboard chains said the ship was drifting; the kedge and the stream anchors, with guns lashed some small distance from them, were let go; the whole crew were on deck in a moment; and a kind of panic prevailed, which gave the doctor a good idea as to the confusion which would inevitably follow.

Fortunately, it was a false alarm; but it kept all hands in that feverish state that the lead-line was consulted every second, and more than a quarter of an hour elapsed before the crew could be reconciled to the certainty of their safety.

'I think, sir,' said the master, 'we had better cut away the masts. She labours so heavily that she never can ride out the gale, if it increases.'

'It cannot blow much harder than it does now,' said Bowling, as he shook his wet jacket, a sea having broken upon the bows, and sent its spray as far aft as the taffrail.

'The sea may get higher, sir, and the squalls show that it can blow harder. It is a miracle our having held on so long.'

'Well, then,' replied Bowling, like a man convinced against his will, 'away with the main and mizen-masts! We must keep the fore-mast to run her on shore, if we are unfortunate enough to require its assistance.'

There are few things more disheartening than cutting away the masts of a ship. The hull is of little use without their aid; and depriving one's self of these useful and ornamental appendages is like amputating the legs and arms of a man, leaving the trunk quite dependent upon others for assistance. But imperious necessity demanded it, and away went the mizen, and then the main-mast. The foretop-mast was got on deck, and nothing left to hold any wind but the fore-mast, with the foreyard swayed half-mast up.

With the flood tide the wind came on stronger, and the sea ran higher. The ship evidently had dragged a little; for the lead which was held up and down in the main-chains had now become up and down under the fore-chains. Now there was no security; and in one of those tremendous gusts which rarely occur on the coast of England, but are common in milder climates, the best bower parted, the small bower came home, and the *Thames* fell off broadside to the wind.

Now came all the horrors of a shipwreck under the worst of circumstances—darkness. True, indeed, the white surf, as it broke over

the beach, gave a kind of unwelcome light. It marked the rocky shore, which stood as a limit to the sea; and it pointed out dangers the mariner could not shun.

To say that discipline could command silence in such an awful moment would be madness. If men were silent, it was from fear. An enemy may be vanquished; flight may shelter; and death is not certain even in the hottest combat. But a wreck in the dark night, when the sea runs high, and the winds howl and hiss at destruction, is the forerunner to many a silent grave. There was nothing for it but to run up shore stem on, and even Bowling hesitated, as if wishing to prolong the catastrophe for a few minutes; but knowing that the small bower might yet check her as she got into shallower water, and perhaps hinder her drifting into a nearer vicinity to the shore, he reluctantly ordered the cables to be cut; and the *Thames*, falling off before the wind, was standing towards the shore. Now the death-signal was given; the guns of the frigate were fired one after the other; and such was the noise of the elements that the lee guns could hardly be heard to windward. The flash must be seen, if the sound was lost in the break of the sea. Blue lights were burnt; and the ten minutes of life were well employed in giving warning to others that the frigate had drifted, and was near her wreck.

The sea boiled higher and higher as the angry surf broke over her quarters, lifting her high above the usual level, and then sinking her so low that each man's lips were firmly compressed, and each hand clung to a cleat or rope, as the keel was expected to make its first touch on the rocks beneath. As she rose again to the coming sea, the wind appeared to have increased a hundred times in strength; the wave came hissing onwards; the boiling spray blew over the ship; the sea broke upon her quarters; and as she descended into the valley beneath, a sudden crash announced the unwelcome intelligence—the rudder, forced from pentle and gudgeon, burst through the upper deck; the whole frame seemed disjointed. The foremast tottered and fell, and the ship stopped one moment on the threshold of destruction.

It was but a second; the loud shriek of the affrighted youngsters was unheard amidst the general ruin which accompanies the total abandonment of discipline. Some lay down on the deck, and grasped, with a deadly clutch, some bolt which seemed to offer security from being washed overboard into the 'hell of waters,' which foamed and hissed around them. Some had secured oars, and relied upon the numerous loose spars; some, as if eager to be saved before their companions, leaped into the quarter-boats; and the fear which impelled them to this action blinded them to the consequences. The next sea washed away the boats, and some five or six of the crew were left to struggle in the sea.

The ship had gone end on, and, although hard and fast astern, was still afloat forward; therefore, as the sea came in it lifted the stern-post clear off the rocks, and she surged onwards before she was again left aground, having started, in the suddenness of the shock, all her fastenings.

It is when placed in such situations, while suggesting resources to save others and oneself, that true courage is shown. In the noise and tumult of the battle many men are brave, and do great actions, which raise them to high honours, who would slink away into the lowest retreat to avoid a combat with the elements. These men sink into insignificance, and are tossed upon the bosom of the sea like an infant in a giant's arms; there strength is almost unavailing, and the mighty power of man's mind almost useless.

The second shock shook the ship violently; the keel was heard to grate along the rocks, and then it was imagined suddenly to have started altogether.

The doctor stood just before the stump of the mizen-mast, and by him, close to the wheel, was Bowling; a moment's life could scarcely be reckoned upon by the most sanguine. And Bowling gave his hand to his fighting friend, and wished him good-bye.

'Good-bye,' said the doctor, 'until to-morrow morning; we have got plenty of work to do to-night. I shall stick by the wreck until it deserts me!'

Some of the men availed themselves of the spare spars and jumped overboard, clinging to masts and yards for their safety; others cowered on the main-deck, believing themselves secure whilst the bulwarks held together. Some said their prayers, and lifted their trembling voices in supplications to God; others, whom even death in all its terrors could not scare, cursed the sea as it broke over the ship, and seemed to defy its power:—these men all advised to stay by the wreck.

In the meantime, those generous fellows on shore, who are ever active when danger is at hand, had left their warm beds and stood on the beach with lanterns ready to assist the shipwrecked crew. A small, drizzling rain added a little to their uncomfortable situation; but Englishmen never heed these trifles when they can be serviceable in danger. They held their miserable lanterns to cheer the seamen, and show them that assistance was at hand; but it looked like a mockery in such a night, and in such a gale, to hint at security, although apparently so near.

Who had landed or who had been drowned, or dashed headlong against the rocks, no one knew; all the most timid had tried their fortunes by endeavouring to reach the shore, and not more than forty remained on board. Each sea, as it rolled along, contributed to

the scene of devastation ; the upper bulwarks began to give way ; the booms and boats were swept into the sea ; the stern frame was battered to pieces ; and each succeeding wave made a clear rush along the main deck. Fatigue soon began to overcome the most resolute ; but when death is near, hard indeed is the struggle against it, and man, as Byron says, 'Sinks outwearied rather than o'ercome.'

Four hours had yet to pass before the welcome light of day could break to show the resolute remaining few the dangers they had to encounter, and the assistance which awaited them. And before that long-wished-for hour arrived not more than twenty survived on board the *Thames*, the rest, either worn out or discouraged, had been washed from the decks, or taken the desperate resolution of facing the foaming danger.

CHAPTER LIV.

IN WHICH TRUE FRIENDSHIP IS DELINEATED, AND A ROPE'S END IS A DESIRABLE ACQUAINTANCE.

It was a night seldom experienced in England ; and the oldest inhabitants of Penzance scarcely could compass in their memories a storm heavier than this. Houses were partially unroofed ; windows were shattered ; and the whole coast was strewed with wrecks. It is related, but upon rather questionable authority, that the inhabitants of the coast of Cornwall, in times happily gone by, subsisted upon the good things which fortune thus lavished upon them ; and that one Sunday, during a sermon, the pious clergyman saw his congregation visibly decreasing. At this unusual proceeding he gently remonstrated, and inquired the reason.

'Please, your reverence,' said a man in the church, 'there is a glorious wreck close by——'

'Stop ! stop ! my Christian brethren,' exclaimed the preacher, as the whole church rose to avail themselves of the chance, 'I have scarce three words to say to all who thus generously rush to yield assistance'—the congregation paused—the clergyman divested himself of his robes and called out —'Let us all start fair.' And away went shepherd and flock to pick up the fragments.

At daylight, the coast was discovered lined with men and women ; the latter very busy in removing any light obstacles from the path of their husbands ; and it was a scene of great activity.

'Now for it !' cried the doctor ; 'if the wind does not go down as the sun gets up, we may make up our minds to a swim.'

'Not while the craft holds together,' said Bowling. 'As long as she lasts I am captain of her, and I will be the last man out of her.'

'I wonder if Green is gone ?' observed the doctor, apparently musing over his revenge. 'That sea did more to break her up than all the others. We shall not have much longer to wait.'

'How dreadfully high it runs,' said Bowling, fixing his eye upon the beach ; 'do you think we could manage to get a rope on shore ?'

'We can try,' replied his companion. 'There's the deep sea lead-line in its brackets abaft ; I'll fetch it after this sea is passed. Now what can we do with it ?'

'We must fasten a spar to it, and if it drifts on shore, we may yet get a stouter rope conveyed by it, and that will assist us much in our safety. We had better get forward.'

'Then we may take leave of the quarter-deck,' said the doctor, as he made a bolt forward between the seas, carrying with him the heavy reel. Bowling followed him, and just in time, for the next sea split up the planks, and left the whole of the after part of the ship to float away piecemeal. The end of the line was made fast to a loose spar, which providentially yet remained ; and from the shore it was plainly distinguished as it was thrown overboard. The line was paid overboard with a free hand ; and great was the anxiety of the remaining crew to witness its arrival.

The doctor was the most active of any ; he got through the foremast port into the head ; for this appeared to be the best place for security. Here he found one of his few friends. Green had sheltered himself against the bulwark, and had contrived to lash himself to some of the beckets, which had been nailed up for wet swabs. 'Ah ;' said the doctor, 'you here ?—We shall have another swim together yet, Mr. Green !'

'Now, my lads !' cried the captain, 'we must get the end of a hawser up. Who is the man to volunteer for that service ?'

One or two still liked the word volunteer, and went down to see what could be done ; but all attempts to gain the end were impracticable ; the ship was full of water, which washed over the combings of the main hatchway.

'There's still a chance,' said Bowling ; 'the line is safe on shore ; and when they find we do not bend a hawser or a stouter rope on, they will understand that we have not the means. We must make our end fast now, and leave them to act ; if they bend on a rope we must try to get it on board.'

'I think, sir,' said old Neptune, 'that if we could sling a wad-net on to the deep sea lead-line—it's stout enough for a man to be swung on it, and washed ashore, if he clears the rocks——'

'It's a first-rate invention !' observed the

doctor; 'and I've got a man ready for the service. Now, Master Green, are you a volunteer, or shall I press you?'

'Why, Mister——'

'Oh, avaust there, none of your misters! it's now every man for himself, and God for us all; we've no time for titles or compliments. You and I have got an account to square off in that place, which does not look very quiet for our fight; if you volunteer, I give up my claim upon you; if you don't, your cowardly carcass shall lend a hand to save mine. And I'll take care of my hair this time.'

Green thought that no opportunity was better than this; and he volunteered.

'Tell them to bend a stout rope on, Green,' said the captain, 'and to haul enough of this line to them; so that when we haul the rope on board, they will have the end of the line still on shore.'

Neptune launched his former barber; he was swung in a wad-net, which was lashed to the line by two iron grummets. To clap these on the line, they had to cut it; but it was securely knotted afterwards.

There is always a fortune that protects the drunkard and the coward. Green was essentially the latter; and no one could have clung to his swinging bed with firmer hold. He worked his way easily by hauling himself along, not a little assisted by the heavy seas which threatened to swamp him. And as they came, he doubled himself up as well as he could, and clung to the wad-net; then, as the greedy wave receded from the beach on which it had been repulsed in its approach, Green clung to the line and maintained his ground. He landed safe; and jumping out, never delivered his message, but staggered away, supported by one or two good Christians who took him to the nearest house.

In this scene of exertion there was none so active or so eager as an elderly-looking man, who, it was evident, had long been accustomed to the sea; but it never occurred to him to do what was requisite, although he had no objection to do what was dangerous. He threw off his clothes, and availed himself of the net which had proved so useful to Green; and he faced the foaming seas, using the lead-line as his holdfast. The people on shore endeavoured to dissuade him; but he laughed at their fears as he said, 'When I took Martinique I had to swim against a shower of shot; what's a little salt water to that?' And old Watson, summoning back all the vigour of youth, screamed as he said, 'Bowling and I swam together then, and so we will now!'

Very few who have not seen what desperate men can achieve would believe such an act as this possible; but the first Lord Exmouth did just as great an act when he succeeded in reaching the *Dutton* East Indiaman. His descendants wear as a crest the resemblance of a vessel shipwrecked, which was granted from that circumstance.

Bravely did old Watson dare the heavy seas. He clung like a cat when the coming wave dashed with all its fury upon him; and then, panting and blowing from half-suffocation, he hauled himself along. The doctor was the first who perceived him coming; and although one man more on board the wreck would rather embarrass than assist the survivors, yet was it a grateful sight to see that assistance could be rendered from the shore without the absolute certainty of death.

'I suppose,' said the doctor (who, if ever he had known fear since the vessel struck, had quite outgrown it from his long security), 'they have no rope in Cornwall, or that they have made Green a hero, and in the intoxication of his grandeur he has forgotten the message.'

'Perhaps, poor fellow,' said Bowling, 'he was taken away faint and exhausted, and unable to speak.'

'He was much given to middle-watch fits and faintings, sir,' replied his friend, 'but the water always cured him. This is a gallant fellow, who has ventured his life for ours. We must lend him a hand over the head-rails, for he seems pretty nearly done.'

'Tip us your flipper,' cried Watson to the doctor; 'that's the time of day! There's no occasion to embalm me if I die; I have swallowed enough salt to make a red herring of myself. Thank you—where's Bowling?'

'There,' said the doctor, surveying the rough-looking creature before him.

'Here we are, my old commander,' said Watson, 'in another business of danger!'

'Watson, my hero!' said Bowling, 'this is kind of you, to risk your life for your old acquaintance.'

'I think you saved mine at Martinique; so we are quits. A pretty kettle of fish you've made of this! What's to be done now?'

'The man we sent on shore was ordered to direct some one to bend on a stouter rope to the lead-line, so that we could all get on shore in safety in the manner this man was sent.'

'The crowd caught him up, and, declaring him the greatest man that ever lived, have made him long before this as drunk as any lord. If he had swum with us at Martinique—oh! I forgot I saw your wife the other day, rather high and mighty; but then, poor thing! she knows no more of friendship than a Jamaica nigger does of snow.'

Bowling was inclined to get into conversation about his Susan, when a tremendous sea fairly ripped up the decks, leaving only the forecastle entire. Even Watson looked a little astonished, and, giving a kind of whew! remarked, 'The sooner we are out of this

the better. Hand up the end of a rope, and I'll take it on shore.'

'The store-room is swamped, and the cable-tier, as you may see, inaccessible.'

'That's a long word for such a strong breeze. Here goes! Look out for my hat being thrown aloft, and haul away!'

'Mind you have enough of the lead-line to make a hauling-line of on shore.'

'I understand; here goes, I say! This is not so bad as Martinique, when I—'

The doctor stopped the yarn which even then old Watson would have spun, and away went this water-dog over the bows, and was soon covered by the following sea. No man was more active than Watson. Although nearly dead from the immersions, he gave directions for the rope, and bent it on himself. He then desired one of the men, for he was too weak himself, to throw up a hat, and a moment afterwards they saw the stout rope crawling into the water.

No sooner was everything made fast on board than the rope on shore was carried so high up the beach that it was nearly clear of the water altogether. Now came a little trial of that generous feeling which is oftentimes seen amongst men accustomed to hair-breadth escapes. None would go first.

'Richardson,' said Bowling, 'I am captain of this ship and of her crew until a court-martial is held upon me for her loss. I order you to go.'

Richardson said, 'I'm forced to obey orders anyhow, but I should like to have the honour of swinging your honour.'

'Thank you, my lad! I feel what you say, and know what you mean; I must be the last man. Go!'

Richardson went on shore like a lord. He got a little ducking, but landed safe. They wanted to take him to a house; but he called them all land-lubbers, and swore he would never leave the rope until his captain was safe. However, he had no objection to drink their healths in a glass of rum, as he had taken plenty of water on his journey on shore to make salt grog of it. The net was soon hauled on board again, and ten men were safely landed. Not one of these would leave the rope until all should be on shore; and having ascertained Green's delinquency, they vowed they would cob him most heartily when they got alongside of him. 'I wonder,' said Neptune, 'what's the go now, that they don't make the signal on board.'

'Why, it's the fighting doctor and the captain a quarrelling about who shall be last. Some of our chaps wanted to know who was to be first, but I'm blessed if those two won't come together.'

'I insist upon it, doctor, that you go first.'

'I really cannot take precedency of a married man.'

'You see how this sea is breaking up the vessel. The very planks on which we stand are started; and if the head-rails give way, or the forecastle breaks up, we are lost.'

'I am very sorry for the consequences; but it's my duty to attend the sick on board, and I'll go below, and dive for the cockpit, and fetch up a corpse rather than go first. I tell you the plain matter of fact, Captain Bowling; you may try me at a court-martial if you like, but if I go I'll be——'

'Don't swear now, doctor. Look astern, and see what's coming up. We have no time to lose; let's go together.'

'You get into the net, and I'll swing on below.'

The captain got in, and the doctor waved his hat, and away went the sling, leaving the doctor monarch of all he surveyed. He gave the captain a cheer, who, believing the event to be accidental, looked back with a look of envy at his old faithful companion.

The doctor hauled the sling back for himself, and got in it. He gave the signal, and he felt himself moving along the rope. At this moment the squall behind came up; it lashed up a more furious sea than ever; and a higher one striking the wreck, heeled her over to port. The rope had been made fast to the starboard bow; and this fresh strain, brought upon it by the sudden heeling over, snapped it, and the doctor fell into the water enclosed in the net. Bowling saw the accident, and comprehended the imminent danger of his friend. 'Haul away for your lives!' he shouted. 'He must be drowned without we can haul him right on the shore!' And away the last ten men scampered with the rope, lugging the doctor by force along the bottom until they landed him like a netted shark.

Bowling was the first by his side. The method adopted to save his life had nearly caused his death, and he was carried, speechless and bleeding, to the nearest medical aid.

Out of the crew of three hundred men, not more than sixty survived the wreck. Those who, imagining the first danger the least, had precipitated themselves overboard, were all lost. Their bodies strewed the beach; and for days afterwards bodies, bruised and mangled, were thrown on shore. Some, more fortunate than the rest, had been carried on a high sea, and dashed upon the beach. Then they dug their nails into the shingle, and endeavoured to hold themselves back from being forced into the sea, which having again received them, turned them over on the next wave and threw them even beyond the mark which forced, in its reflux, the round shingle into the sea.

Throughout the night men had been down to the limit of the shore, watching to render assistance; and many a body, thrown like a weed upon the beach, had been carried to

the surgeon. But no one who has not witnessed the scene can imagine the desolation that reigns after a wreck. The shore seems covered with broken spars, and boats rendered useless by the injury they have received. Here and there a cask may be seen; old pieces of rope, small canvas, yards, masts—everything which contributes to the equipage of a ship—lie strewed along; whilst here and there the unsightly view of a corpse, swollen and bloated from the worst of all deaths, is thrown upon the beach, an awful warning of the terror and danger of a seaman's life.

Although Bowling was requested by the principal inhabitants of the town to dwell with them, and some even quarrelled for the honour of hospitality, yet Bowling would only live with his old friend in danger, Watson; and on this occasion, although Mrs. Watson could not forget the injury Susan had done her in past times, she behaved like a good Samaritan to Bowling.

Before the official despatch, announcing the loss of the *Thames*, was begun, a note was despatched to Susan.

It began and ended thus: 'You will hear of the loss of my frigate. This will convince you I am safe.'

It was with feelings of the deepest regret that Bowling and the doctor attended the burial of their former shipmates. Amongst these was the master, and two of the lieutenants. The former had been washed overboard whilst endeavouring to burn a blue light after the ship had struck. The remainder of the crew were mustered, and were kept in constant employment in endeavouring to save every store and every spar which was washed on shore. The official letter was written, in which every word of truth was inserted—the exact position of the ship, the calm, the treacherous calm before the fog, the gale, its sudden shift, and the termination of the event. By return of post an order came for the remainder of the officers and men to embark on board a brig sent from Plymouth for that purpose, and an intimation was given that at that port the court-martial would take place.

'Watson,' said Bowling, 'we have had one or two narrow squeaks for this life; take this watch, and when you look at it remember that no time can obliterate my friendship, or the acknowledgment of the obligation under which you have placed me.'

'That's all gammon,' replied Mrs. Watson; 'but I like you, although you are the husband of Susan Monckton.'

CHAPTER LV.

IN WHICH THERE IS NAVAL JUSTICE AND SHORE-GOING HOSPITALITY.

Bowling had written to Susan concerning the pending court-martial, and anxious as he was to see her, he begged she would not come to him until after the court-martial had assembled. He said that on this unfortunate occasion, no blame could by possibility be attached to him had the master survived; but that now the malicious and the envious might detract from his character, and finish all their arguments thus: 'All I know is, that Captain Bowling commanded the *Thames*, and that he lost her.' And when Susan, in her warm, affectionate letter, greeted his return in the warmest language, she forbore to mention Harrison's discovery, being willing to give her husband a double surprise; first in her own appearance, and secondly, in a father's embrace.

Harrison was eager to write to his long-lost son, but Susan begged of him to desist: 'He will be here as soon as your letter could reach, and the surprise will compensate him for the loss of his ship.'

'It is a hard thing, Susan,' said old Harrison, 'for a father who has found a son to wait a moment. I have always some dreary forebodings that I shall never see him. Hope deferred has, in reality, made my heart sick. Who knows but the brig in which he is to embark may be wrecked, or fifty thousand accidents to which the perilous life of a sailor is subject may occur?'

'Why, I vow you almost frighten me; and had I not known that hope, although deferred, may ultimately be realized, as in my own case, I should begin to swoon with apprehension; but that would be unworthy of Bowling's wife, and I will not believe it possible that such events could occur.'

'Well, well, my dear, I did not wish to frighten you, but wise men do gather experience from the past, and by long-gone events judge of futurity; he has been wrecked once.'

'And therefore the chance is less that it may occur again. I've heard Bowling mention that an Irishman, one Paddy O'Leary, in a hot action with an enemy, put his head in a hole made by a shot, calculating that the chances were at least a million to one that no other shot passed through the same hole.'

'Well, my darling, if comfort is to be had for the fretful and the apprehensive, my sweet Susan, you would give them it; how long are we to wait before we see him?'

'The martial law does not linger like the civil; perhaps by this time he is at Plymouth, and to-morrow he may be tried; perhaps time will be given him, and then a week may elapse.'

'A week,' said Harrison; 'I could as soon look forward to a year. I must go to my wife; good-bye.'

A week was suffered to elapse before the court assembled, and Bowling stood before his judges to answer the charge of having lost his Majesty's ship *Thames*, then under his command.

It was impossible for any man to have looked at Captain Bowling without admiration ; he was, as the song says, 'of the manliest beauty,' and his large eye, quick and clear, seemed to pass every object in review before him. His brother officers knew his value well, and although he had very little acquaintance with them personally, yet his name was familiar in every midshipman's berth ; and when dashing deeds were mentioned, the capture of Martinique and of the frigate were sure to be mentioned, and the hero's name became public property.

The circumstances of the loss of the *Thames* were gleaned principally from one of the lieutenants : he swore that in his watch every possible precaution had been taken ; that for hours the master had remained on deck, watching for a glimpse of the sun ; that every half-hour they sounded ; and that during the fog not a quarter of an hour elapsed without this precaution being taken. He swore to the unremitted attention of the captain ; that he was hardly ever absent from the deck ; that the cables were bent, and that all instructions in the book had been rigidly complied with. The court then elicited the sudden change of wind, the constant exertion made to overcome the misfortune—the wreck of the brig, and finally, the wreck of the *Thames*. It was evident it arose from no neglect ; but as a matter of justice more than necessity, Captain Bowling was called upon for his defence ; but previous to entering into that, the court retired, for a quarter of an hour, the time asked for by the prisoner.

Bowling had remarked a fine-looking elderly man observing him closely ; and from the interest expressed in his looks his anxiety appeared greater for the prisoner than the prisoner felt for himself. When the time was allowed for the preparation of the defence, this stranger asked Bowling if he could assist him. There was something which seemed to attach both parties to each other, and when Bowling thanked him for his kind offer, he added, 'I have seen the manner in which you participate in my feelings, and I cannot but be grateful for such attention to my interests.'

'I feel indeed for your interest,' replied the stranger, 'and I wish I could urge you to turn your attention to your defence.'

'It is done—it is here,' said Bowling, 'I wrote it yesterday ; it is no unusual thing,' he continued, smiling, 'for court-martial defences to be written a month before the trial. We have no legal quibbles, and the prisoner knows every word which will be uttered against him. The court are assembled, I shall not detain them long.'

'Allow me to be near you,' said the stranger.

Bowling bowed an assent, and he read his defence in a clear, manly voice. The doctor stood close to him, evidently little engaged in the matter ; his eyes were rivetted on a short, curious little man, who was a spectator, and who seemed to give his undivided attention to the minutes. It was soon over : the court was cleared ; again the public were admitted ; the full and honourable acquittal which of course followed excited little attention. At the close, the president, in the handsomest manner, returned the captain's sword, remarking, that he was proud of his situation as president, since it gave him the opportunity of returning to one, who had so gallantly used it in the defence of his country, that sword which he prayed he might long live to use to the honour of the service, of which he was an ornament, and to the advancement of his already justly-earned reputation. This seemed too much for the old gentleman ; he took Bowling's hand, and held it firmly in his grasp.

'It is the happiest moment of my life,' he said ; whilst the doctor whispered, 'Who's your energetic friend ?'

The president, before he dissolved the court, called 'William Green.' The doctor immediately bustled up. 'Green,' said the president, 'the court have heard with considerable pleasure your daring conduct in this affair ; and they attribute the safety of the remaining crew and officers to your intrepid courage in risking your life in the net, solely to relieve your shipmates. The court have recommended you to the Admiralty as a man who should be rewarded by a warrant ; and I take this opportunity of mentioning that when you are reported qualified for the situation of gunner, you will receive the appointment. This court is dissolved.'

The doctor could not contain his laughter ; he put his hands over his mouth to avoid the sound, and rushed unceremoniously out of the cabin. For now he had found out that, although a man may be an arrant coward, he may gull the whole world with his bravery. Green had been taken to the house of the editor of an insignificant paper ; but as it contained the best account of the disastrous wreck and loss of lives which occurred in Mount Bay, it was copied into one of the London journals, and soon went the round of the press. In this account there was a thrilling paragraph devoted to Green, who was pictured 'as the bravest of the brave ; holding on with almost matchless strength to the slender lead-line—threatened every moment with destruction by the breaking seas, which thoroughly immersed him—and yet animated only by the holy cause in which he had ventured in this dangerous enterprise, clinging to the rope until he reached the shore, and then urging others to emulate himself in danger, to rescue his beloved commander and his firmly attached comrades.' Public opinion was in his favour ; and he was not the first, nor will he be the last scamp who will make

a reputation by a handsome puff in the papers. Green walked out of court, blushing with his honours.

'Now, doctor,' said Bowling, 'I'm off to Exeter.'

'Indeed you are not, sir! You have another duty to perform, and perform it you must;—we have had a few dangers together, now we must have one parting hour—one dinner.'

'Oh, dinner, doctor! think of the impatience of Susan.'

'Think of the duty we owe to you, and of the necessity of your accepting our invitation.'

'Will you allow me, sir,' said the stranger, 'to reconcile both parties, I hope, to the proposition? I am going to night to Exeter myself; my carriage is at the Fountain. If you, and all the officers, will allow me to solicit the honour of your company at dinner, directly after the last toast is drunk I will set off, pleased with having for my companion one whose reputation is so high as Captain Bowling's, and grateful beyond description for having made acquaintance with so gallant a company.'

'You are a regular trump, old gentleman!' replied the doctor; 'and we will all dine with you!'

'I must start directly,' observed Bowling.

'It is useless,' replied the stranger; 'you will not arrive until four in the morning. Wait until nine o'clock, and you may drive up to Mrs. Talbot's to breakfast.'

Bowling looked at the stranger with a look of surprise. 'How, sir, may I ask you, do you know my destination?'

'I know more of you than I am allowed to say, and when you know as much of me, you will bless the day which brought us together as friends, and which will leave us more than common acquaintances. Now, sir,' continued the gentleman, turning to the doctor, 'as you proposed the dinner, you shall order it. I shall judge of your estimation of your captain's character by the mode in which you treat him. Remember that there is no limit to the expense.'

'I would rather you ordered it,' said the doctor. 'I hate sporting upon other men's manors.'

'We will go together; take my arm, Captain Bowling, I shall shortly rely upon yours.'

On entering the inn, the stranger whispered to the landlord.

'At what o'clock, sir?'

'At six; mind, you understand me.'

'For how many, sir?'

'Ten.'

'Hulloa! Captain Bowling, here's a salute you never expected!'

Bowling looked round, and he saw his surviving crew, walking two and two, headed by old Neptune, who was spokesman. Bowling stood at the door-steps to receive the last farewell. All hands took off their hats, and smoothed down their hair, as Neptune began, 'Please your honour, we are come to show our colours at parting, and wish that every breeze which fills the canvas of your life may be a fair wind. Here we are, sir, all—everyone, but Green; and he's got too much liquor in his hold to carry sail with safety. And we hope you'll excuse the liberty we take in saying, that if the Admiralty know what's best for the country, and give you another ship, you will allow us to enter on board of her; for we will stick to you to the last—do our duties as we hope we have done; and if ever we get athwart hawse of a Frenchman, Captain Bowling need not nail his colours to the mast, for there will not be one man on board who would haul them down—not even if he was ordered; and that order will never be given by our own gallant captain.'

Here the crew gave three cheers, and the old gentleman, with tears running down his face, ordered the landlord to get dinner for sixty, instead of for ten, and all in one room.

Bowling was about to make a speech, when the old gentleman bustled by, and desired to be heard. Neptune called out for the stranger to take off his hat when he spoke to the captain; others shouted, 'None of your yarns, old boy; don't shove in your oar,' and other sentences equally polite and comprehensive. Bowling restored silence, and the old gentleman proceeded.

'I will speak, I say. I am an older man than any of you, and have got a son a captain in the navy. You are a fine set of fellows, and I'll make all your hearts glad. You shall dine with your captain to-day, every one of you. I've ordered dinner for sixty, and when you have drunk his health in a bumper of punch, then you shall hear what he's got to say. Now away with you until six o'clock, and we'll have a jollification such as I have not had for five-and-twenty years!'

'What a regular good un!' said one fellow.

'What an illigant boatswain he'd make!' observed an Irishman.

'That's the purser's steward for my mess!' added a third.

'Hurrah for the old gentleman with the bald head and white tie!' cried another. And after three cheers the crew departed for a little preparatory excitement in the way of a hop and a glass.

'It's very odd, doctor,' said Bowling, 'but I never felt towards anyone as I do to that old gentleman.'

'Nor I,' replied the doctor, 'for I never before fell in with one who asked a ship's company to dinner. It will be the finest scene ever witnessed, and it will give a haul upon his purse which will stretch the mouth not a little.'

Every praise should be given to the crew, for although they took a refresher, and many a lawyer before going into court has greedily availed himself of the same, yet they all kept sober, and at six o'clock mustered in the ball-room, twenty-five on each side of the long table, whilst the old gentleman and the officers occupied the cross-table. It was a sight worthy of Bowling, and the tears started in his eyes as he mustered at a glance the survivors of that fine crew.

The stranger, before he began, briefly addressed the men :—

'A few days back, my lads, and you were in the jaws of death ; be grateful to that Providence who has preserved you in the hour of danger, and offer up your sincere thanks for this which is before you.' He then said grace, and there was not one man who did not bow his head as the old gentleman said—'Amen.'

'They'll all be as drunk as owls before the cloth's off the table,' observed the doctor.

'I've taken care to prevent that,' replied the landlord.

'What's the gentleman's name,' said the doctor, in a whisper to the landlord.

'Must not say, sir,' and away went the landlord.

The doctor tried every one of the servants ; they had never seen him but for two days.

'Hulloa,' said the chairman, 'I have got no vice.'

'The armourer's there,' said the doctor, 'he's the best man for that,' and the armourer was voted in.

It was a capital dinner—rounds of beef, hot and cold, hams, fowls, and such like solids, greeted the eyes of the seamen. They had never sat down to such a feed before ; and notwithstanding the restraint they felt, and which operated so as to check any remarks except what came from an Irish foretopman, they fed voraciously, and drank rum and water, previously mixed, with decided energy.

'How are you getting on at that table ?' cried the president.

'Mighty conveniently, your honour, considering the heat of the action ; there's Richardson run aboard of a turkey, and I'm making acquaintance with a pig.'

'Nothing to find fault with, is there ?'

'Nothing, your honour, excepting that Tom Ratling says he thinks you've employed the doctor for purser's steward, and he's clapped the grog on the sick list.'

All hands joined in the laugh, and so did the doctor, who called out 'that they would find the grog strong enough before two hours were over.'

'By the piper, if I drink this for two hours,' said Paddy, 'I'll be swamped.' This let loose the tongues, and the grog gave a little spirit ; it was a regular between-decks in a moment ; and there was nothing heard but the rattling of plates and the noise of voices.

'I say, you sir,' said Neptune to a waiter, 'give us a fid of duff, will you ?' (a piece of pudding.)

'I'll ask the master of the inn if he's got one,' said the waiter.

'Hand here some "soft tack!"' (fresh bread) cried another.

The waiters were quite puzzled.

'Here, you land lubber !' shouted a third, 'fist us hold of the liquor, and don't stand there, turning your eyes up like a duck in thunder. What's that you're hauling about ? Is it lob-scouse twice laid, bullock's liver and sawdust, or a monkey's tail shaved against the grain ? How I should like, Ben, to take in a little of his after sail, which hangs down over his starn like the lug sail of the captain's gig put out to dry.'

'Come here,' said Ben to the waiter, who was rather young in his calling, 'aren't you ashamed of yourself to be dancing attendance upon any set of lubbers on shore when you might be serving your king afloat ? Did you ever hear of Nelson, St. Vincent, Jervis, Collingwood, and Bowling ?'

'Yes,' said the waiter, assuming a little authority in his manner.

'Then I'm blest if you shan't drink their healths. Come,' cried Ben, 'no hauling off ; I've got you by the starn, and here's the liquor ; now call out loud, "Success to the hero of the Nile !" or by the piper that played before Moses, we'll fill you up chock full, and strike you down the after hatchway into the spirit-room.'

The waiter, who was very unaccustomed to such obligations, resisted manfully ; but in a trice he was hauled over Ben's knees, Paddy M'Laughlin held his nose, and Mr. Rory M'Queen poured the grog down his throat in spite of his kicking and flinging.

'What's the row ?' asked one.

'Only stowing the chap's hold with spirits for a six months' cruise !'

The poor fellow was almost choked ; and on being released, in the first ebullition of anger, he struck Ben, who called out, 'A mutiny ! a mutiny !' handed him across the table, and summary justice was done by the administration of a good cobbing ; for which laudable purpose Mr. Patrick M'Laughlin, ever ready for a spree, had borrowed the shovel. The other waiters were rather alarmed at this promulgation of martial law, but not fearing a like infliction, were amused at the scene, and laughed at their companion, who, after having been most woefully cobbed, was turned adrift.

Bowling came down to insist upon his liberation ; but as the poor fellow had been punished without much care, his face had been jammed in a dish of mashed potatoes, and thus increased the laugh, already incontrollable. To turn the attention of the crew

from the mischief into which they were fast verging, it was resolved, at the advice of Bowling, to call upon Neptune for a song.

The cloth was cleared away, fresh grog brought; and Mr. Rory M'Queen, who was now in the seventh heaven of inebriation, jumped up and said, 'Mr. President, your honour——'

'Hulloa!' answered the stranger, rather surprised.

'I'll venture, your honour, to make a proposal to the captain of the inn, which he'll be delighted to listen to. Bring pipes and backey, you spooney; did you ever hear a sailor sing without his backey?' And down sat M'Queen.

'Before you begin to smoke,' said the stranger, 'I propose the health of Captain Bowling, and long may he live to be an honour to the gallant profession to which he belongs.'

Before another word could have been uttered, half the men leapt on the table, and set the decanters rattling, to the serious advantage of the glass-blowers.

'Here's long life to your honour!' cried one. 'Hurrah!' went a squeaking boy, whose shrill voice reached above the top-chain notes of the older seamen.

'Success to you, sir!' shouted another.

'Bad luck to the foul wind which ever should take your sails aback, and a fair breeze to send you home.'

'Pleasant roadstead for life, Captain Bowling; well moored and good holding ground to you, sir.'

'Calm and clear,' said M'Laughlin, 'with your wife, squally a little with your children, and fresh breezes and fine weather in the harbour to which you are bound. If your honour ever gets another ship, ain't it M'Laughlin's own dear self that will walk barefooted from Cork to volunteer?'.

'Thank you, thank you, my lads,' said Bowling. 'All I can say in return is this, that if ever the Admiralty trust me with another ship, I hope I may have every man I see now under my command. And if we have lost one frigate, why, we will add two or three more to the navy list, and take them ready fitted from another nation.'

Long, loud, and noisy were the cheers that followed; and it was evident that the time had arrived, without any song, for all prudent men to retire. Bowling whispered to his host, and the host gave an order to the servant behind him. He then proposed a toast, or attempted to do so; but the row and rattle at the farther end was greater than he could surmount. A boatswain's mate piped belay, and in a trice you might have heard a pin drop.

'My lads,' said Bowling, 'we have another glass to drink before we part——'

'Success to the spaker!' said Mr. M'Queen, 'we are just ready to continue that same until daylight.'

'Hurrah for the principle!' said the purser's steward.

'We must not forget our liberal host, to whom we are all strangers, and whom, perhaps, none of us may ever meet with again. In the name of the surviving officers and crew of the shipwrecked *Thames*, I propose the health of our host, with three times three!—and let every man fill his glass——'

'That's about the only unnecessary order,' said the doctor, 'I have ever heard the captain give.'

'Now, my lads, give just such a cheer as you would if you saw an enemy's flag come down, and our own hoisted instead.'

The stranger said that this day had made him young again—had made him forget years of pain in the consummation of all his hopes. 'Your captain says we may never meet again; but I say we will never part again unknown to him, and he almost unknown to me. I hardly dare say who I am, or how I came amongst you, but I have been led to court your society because you served under *his* command; and I beg you not to break up your festivities because I may leave you. Many years ago I heard a chorus, "Drink! boys, drink! and drive away all sorrow." I have done that this night, and leave you to try the same remedy for your cares.'

'Doctor, I must go—the carriage is ready; and my unknown friend seems to tremble with expectation. There is something about to occur to change my life; and I feel it as others have felt a whisper of death.'

'My Irish friend will have a taste of that; he was in court; and I have arranged a field-day for to-morrow. God bless you, sir——'

'I shall write, doctor; you are pledged to be with me in any other ship I may command?'

'Rely upon me, sir.'

'Now, doctor, take my place, and let me creep away unseen—no, that's unmanly; so I will speak aloud,—Good-bye, my lads!—long may you all live. The doctor will keep you alive until you are all dead drunk!'

The captain and his strange friend walked out under a volley of cheers quite refreshing to anybody who happened to be just falling asleep after the fatigues of the day.

CHAPTER LVI.

IN WHICH THERE IS SOME HOSPITALITY, AND LOTS OF AFFECTION AMONGST BLOOD RELATIONS.

THE carriage rolled rapidly along the road: but few words were uttered between the parties, and those mostly in reference to the probable finale of the evening's entertainment

at the Fountain. Travelling after dinner at a rapid pace is a strong inducement to sleep; and after one or two ineffectual attempts at conversation, heralded each time by a gape, both Bowling and his companion were relieved from all the troubles and vexations of life. In fact, one was pretty hazy, from not being familiar with the conviviality in which he had just been sharing; and the other, from having drunk his Susan's health in one or two glasses swallowed rather quickly between the toasts. One was quickly lost in thoughts of days long past, when a deep pang was inflicted in the shape of a domestic calamity; the other saw the high sea breaking up his fine frigate, and struggling against the wave, he seemed endeavouring to reach some hold which in his present state seemed to elude his grasp.

The first two or three stages were passed unobserved. Even Ivy Bridge, the usual resort of midshipmen, and known as well by name to the navy as was Nelson's after Trafalgar, was arrived at and left without a remark; and the travellers had got nearly to Haldon Hill, when it became evident that in peace a man should be ready for war. The carriage, which had rolled rapidly along, suddenly stopped; and as the fumes of the hot port had somewhat passed away, this check opened their eyes, and they found that night travelling was not always effected in security.

'The money or your life!' said a sturdy villain, as he put his head boldly inside of the carriage, whilst another gentleman of the profession turned a lantern and discovered the two travellers.

'Who the devil are you?' said Bowling, rather startled at the abrupt demand for his worldly goods.

'That may as well remain a secret, and one you will never divulge if you do not look sharp and hand over your money. Is that postilion quiet?'

'Quiet enough,' cried a third voice. 'He'll go down the hill so steadily he won't alarm the gentlemen inside.'

'Come,' said the man, who had withdrawn his lantern and supplied the place by a pistol, 'we've no time to lose. Hand out the money, or I'll put a ball through your obstinate pate!'

'What!' cried Bowling, 'strike my colours without firing a shot! become a prize without a broadside! No, if I do——' and grasping the muzzle of the pistol, he turned it away from himself, and struggled hard for its possession.

'Now Joe,' said the man who held the weapon, 'quick, and settle the hash!'

Bowling succeeded in wrenching the pistol from the highwayman, who left the carriage to get another from his belt, which had got entangled therein.

'Three cheers, and on board!' said Bowling, as he felt the pistol his own. He opened the door, jumped out, and threw himself upon his adversary. It was a fair trial of strength, and Bowling had his money and his life to defend; but he never thought of firing—he thought only of capturing the thief.

'There, you old huckster,' said the man near Bowling's companion, 'take that! and now I'll take your money.' He fired his pistol, the ball of which missed the gentleman, only passing through his coat, and going out at the hinder part of the carriage. The instant the shot was fired, Bowling, who had succeeded in throwing his adversary on the ground, and who had twisted the thief's neckerchief so tightly round that it resembled a preliminary hanging, left his man and flew to the assistance of his friend. He seized the thief unexpectedly by the collar, and, putting his knee upon his back, dragged him down with a heavy fall. He fell under the carriage; and the horses, now liberated (for the third man was coming to the rescue), advanced a little, and placed the thief under the wheel. In the meantime, the old gentleman had jumped out of the carriage, and went to the man whom Bowling had prostrated and nearly choked, seeing him about to rise or struggling for offensive operations, and made a desperate attempt to keep him down. But the thief, young and active, clasped the neckcloth, and held him as in a vice. His knuckles were almost driven in to the throat, and a gasping for breath, previous to his falling, only gave the thief fresh courage.

Bowling was soon round to the scene of action. 'You are a dead man if you stir,' said he to the third thief. 'I do not want to shed your blood; but only move one inch, and you will never move again.'

'Help! help!' shouted the old man, as he sank down: 'help! my son! my son!'

The words were like fire in Bowling's heart. He left his present adversary; and as he saw the thief drawing out his pistol, and his friend on the verge of death, he fired, and liberated him from his intended murderer. The third man, seeing himself alone, resolved on flight; but previous to putting his resolution into force he fired at Bowling. The ball passed through his arm, and he exclaimed, 'The villain has hit me!'

The postilion was now awake from the stupor the first blow had occasioned when it stunned him; and as the old man called out, 'Help! help! my son is wounded!' the postilion came to the scene of action.

The highwayman was mortally wounded, and lay groaning and bleeding, but still was anxious to creep to a ditch to conceal himself. The man under the wheel was not hurt, but held by the weight of the carriage, which was on his coat, and from which he could not liberate himself.

'Put my son—my only son—in safety first!'

'Hand in the old gentleman,' said Bowling; 'never mind me. I am only winged;

but he must be seriously hurt, for his mind is gone. Now look to the fellow under the wheel behind the carriage, and we will take him with us.'

'He can't stir, sir; let me bind your arm.'

'Take this silk handkerchief, and bind it tightly round. That's it; now for my friend here!' The carriage was backed; and the thief, unhurt, finding himself liberated, made a vigorous struggle, and, slipping from beneath the vehicle, got out on the other side, was up and off in a moment.

'I give that fellow considerable credit for that,' said Bowling, as he got in. The postilion shut up the door, and the wheels once more were in motion towards Exeter.

'You are bleeding, my child!' said the stranger.

'Nothing to signify, sir,' replied Bowling. 'How are you!'

'I care not for myself; it is you, you alone, that I would save.'

'Lord bless you, sir! I am ready for another action. I've repaired damages; and although a spar is wounded, the hull's all right.'

From this moment the old gentleman became more and more fidgety. He scarcely allowed a moment to pass without suggesting some more comfortable situation; and Bowling, whose mind was fixed upon Susan, complied with every request without hesitation, keeping his eyes fixed upon the town of Exeter, which now in the first break of day became visible. No sooner arrived than a surgeon, one of those mortal carpenters who patch up the cabinet of human bones, was sent for. Bowling was not seriously hurt. He was, however, in some pain, and was recommended to go to bed; but this he positively refused. He had but eighteen miles more to go before he reached Mrs. Talbot's, and he swore a very positive oath that go he would, and that nothing should stop him.

'Let me go forward,' said the old gentleman, 'and apprize Susan of the accident. She, in her state, must not be alarmed; and in this I shall use the authority I have a right to command.'

'Who and what are you,' said Bowling, 'who have overladen me with obligations, and who appear to know every one connected with me? Will no one tell me this gentleman's name?' he said, appealing to the waiters.

'I will save them the trouble; my name is Harrison.' And now, young gentleman, you are about as wise as you were before.'

'There is something very peculiar in my feelings,' observed Bowling, as he held out his unwounded fin. 'I feel towards you as I never yet felt towards any man; for I have had but few friends during my life. Susan's father was kind; the German doctor was warm and sincere; Susan—dear, dear Susan—was ever the compass which guided my steps; the fighting doctor was my companion in danger, Nelson my protector, Collingwood my patron; and yet I never felt towards one of those as I feel towards you.'

There was a tear which seemed unbidden to rise, and to course down the old man's cheek. 'You shall know more before you are one day older; but at present I am under a promise to Susan, whom I only left three days ago.'

'Only three days ago!' said the excited Bowling. 'Tell me, sir, how is she? Is she well?—happy at my return—anxious for my honourable acquittal—grateful for my escape from the wreck? You have been liberal of your money; now be generous of your words and your information.'

'She is all you could wish—all I could desire. Come, the horses are ready. You are resolved to go; I will not detain you, for your anxiety would do you more mischief than the journey. All I exact is, that I herald your arrival.'

No boy of seventeen was ever more in love than Bowling. He had a brilliant imagination, and a fancy for poetry; and these two dress up love more to the mind of man than half the reality. It is education that gives a zest to love; simple Cymons are incompetent to picture its delights and its endearments. Love dwindles into sensuality if poetry withholds its aid. How differently do the eyes of the ploughman and the eyes of the poet behold the first dawn of day, or watch the golden decline of the sun! The sweet melody of the bird, as it warbles its clear note in the undisturbed air of the morning, becomes sublime music to the poet, whilst to the hind who trudges to his labour it is merely the chirrup of the lark, or the squeak of the sparrow. So it is through life in all its mazes. The uneducated feel the pang as it touches their bodily sufferings; the wise and the imaginative feel it as affecting the mind; and if the latter can heighten joys by adding imagination to the reality, so they can master pain by the resources of the intellect.

The wheels, which rapidly performed their rotatory motion, seemed hardly to move. The last horses were now trotting briskly through the village where our Boniface made his little fortune, and where Cornish had accomplished his villainy. Bowling looked in vain for the sign which formerly swung in the wind, and the large tree which afforded a pleasant shade for those who dozed out existence over a pipe and a pot of beer. All was changed. Even the lawyer's house looked dismal, and scarce a person was seen in the almost deserted street. Briskly trotted the horses by the opposition inn. Bowling's head was forward, looking over the distant country; and with a shout of

delight, such as the seaman expresses in the first discovery of land after his long and tedious passage across the ocean, Bowling welcomed the appearance of Mrs. Talbot's house, as it became visible from the opening on the road-side.

It was as yet but seven o'clock; but the inmates of the house seemed awake and up. Bowling's quick eye discovered people walking near the house; his imagination pointed out Susan. And as he said, 'There! there she is!' he gave Mr. Harrison's hand a squeeze, which left a mark in the fourth finger of a ring he wore on the little one.

'You lovers squeeze hard,' said Harrison; 'yours has made my eyes so dim that I cannot see.'

'Unfortunate, indeed!' said Bowling, not paying the slightest degree of attention to Mr. Harrison. 'The house is full of company; three ladies, and I dare say half a score more bedizening themselves out like peacocks. Oh, for the dear delight of a sequestered cottage! with only Susan to be its light and the life of——'

'Love in a cottage,' said Mr. Harrison, 'is mighty fine in imagination. Solitude may sometimes afford a balm to grief; but to the young and the ardent, not even love can reconcile it beyond the narrow limit of a fortnight. There is a cottage not far from this which has sheltered the sorrowful, and afforded consolation to the afflicted; that cottage belongs to me. Now, if the company at Mrs. Talbot's is disagreeable to you, I will lend it you for a month; but mind, I bargain beforehand, that you neither hang Susan nor yourself to the weeping-willow, or any other tree. A hanging wood,' added the old gentleman, with a smile, 'is beautiful in an advertisement, but discouraging in reality.'

'I have grown familiar with your kindness,' replied Bowling, 'and I accept the offer, if it will not put you to inconvenience.'

'And you will go there to-day with Susan, if the company annoy you.'

'I would willingly avoid going into the house at all, if I could get Susan to come to the gate.'

'How little we know,' said Harrison, laying his hand on Bowling's, 'of that which is for our good in this life! Half an hour after our arrival there, if I were to ask you to leave the house, I dare say you would send for the fighting doctor to stand your second, as you did with that miserable mountebank of foily, Cornish.'

'That also known to you!—but no matter; the mystery will soon be unravelled. Postilion, ring that cursed bell down!—The only people asleep in the establishment are those who ought to be awake!'

'Stop! postilion, let me out; you agreed I should herald you.'

'My good sir,' said Bowling, 'what are you going to say?'

'Say? Why, say the truth to be sure!'

'Truth is desirable always; but a white lie is sometimes requisite. Will you tell her, that in getting on shore from the wreck I hurt my arm? Women always imagine that when a man is wounded, he requires half the after-guard to swab the blood up, which comes in bucketsful.'

'I'll make a compromise with my conscience,' replied the old gentleman, as he was getting out of the carriage. 'No, no,' he continued, 'I lost him once; I'll not leave him at the gate again. Go on, postilion, drive up to the door.'

The arrival of the carriage was a signal for a general rush; and long before Mr. Harrison could get out, his wife, Mrs. Talbot, and Susan had beset the door. The old man first kissed his wife, and then was preparing to perform the same delightful ceremony to Susan, who, however, burst from him, and caught Bowling in her arms. And in that moment of rapture, so absorbed was she in the bright pleasure of his return, that she never observed the arm in the sling, or perceived the blood which, from her pressure, now broke through the bandages, and became visible.

'Susan! Susan! dearest Susan!' said Bowling, as he looked her wistfully in the face. 'You see your shipwrecked sailor returned to you. No mother mourning for a long-lost child could feel half the pleasure at his restoration to her that I feel in this warm and tender embrace.'

'False! false! unutterably false!' said Mrs. Harrison, who flung herself upon him, and seemed inclined to smother him with caresses; whilst, on the other side, Mr. Harrison's arms encircled and partially supported Bowling as he said, 'My son! my son! Now can I claim you, and be happy!'

In this scene, far better imagined than explained, Mrs. Talbot stood by in heart-stricken sorrow. Alas! she had no child to whom she could fly for support in her increasing age; for her those tender ties were severed for ever; and in the remembrance of how much she had lost by her daughter's death, she sank into a chair and wept profusely.

It was some time before Bowling could disentangle himself again to embrace his Susan. And then it was that she first discovered the blood. She gave a loud shriek, which startled Mrs. Talbot from her sorrow, as she pointed to the arm and said, 'Blood!'

'It's a nasty word, and sounds very badly from your dear lips,' said Bowling. 'It's a mere scratch I got in saving myself from the wreck; but tell me, Susan, who are these who dispute your right to me, and why do they weep and laugh alternately as they call me their son?'

'Ay,' said Mr. Harrison, 'you are my son—my long-lost son, restored to me at last—

and your mother will know you by marks which never escape a mother's eye. We must look to that arm of yours. I gave you life and being—you have saved mine; come upstairs whilst we rebandage that, and then we will be merry over your discovery.'

'That is my duty, sir,' said Susan; 'and no one shall tend him but his wife.'

'Not even his old father!'

'Not even his old father. He is mine—I have the best right to be his nurse!'

'That wound saved my life; and you shall not outdo me either in duty or affection. I will watch over him with a parent's care; and I will not trust him even to you, for fear he should be lost to me again.'

CHAPTER LVII.

IN WHICH IS SHOWN THAT THE 'PITCHER MAY BE TAKEN TO THE WELL A HUNDRED TIMES, BUT WILL BE BROKEN AT LAST.'

BOWLING'S measure of delight was full. His pride, his vanity, had always revolted against the idea of his being lowly born: he had discovered his parents, and discovered them affluent, of good birth, and proper station; and in his Susan he had found that love which the vanity of the profession prompts us to say is imagined ever to exist between the sea-bird and its mate.

Whilst the malicious declare a sailor's love emblematic of the inconstant ship, ever varying its course, from the inconstant wind in the inconstant ocean, it would be Susan who would rescue them from the slander, and point out her Bowling as an example of a totally opposite character.

From this moment Harrison sought to prolong his life, which formerly he had disdained.

'Death shuns the wretch who fain the blow would meet!'

But now every thought of his son seemed to alarm him.

It was now May, in the year 1803, and a memorable year it was for the present personages. Mrs. Talbot, in this month, in spite of Ovid's declaration, that 'the girls were good for nought who wed in May,' was to be married to the good-humoured rector; Susan was to make another—a chip of the old block—a Christian; war was to be declared with France, and all England was to be taxed!

No sooner was it evident that war was to be declared than Bowling's restless spirit was startled into extra activity from a letter he received from the fighting doctor:—

'Dear Sir,' it began, 'thank God there is every prospect of a war. I wish I could change my scalpel for a cutlass, and my syringe for a pistol. I have been terribly inactive latterly; and ever since I sent my Irish friend on a longer cruise than he was prepared to take, I have not had one piece of good fortune in the way of a quarrel. You are always in luck; and that bout with the highwaymen was quite delicious. I have walked about Haldon Hill ever since, in the hope of meeting a similar circumstance; but, as usual with unlucky men, I have never been gratified. I beg to volunteer my services to sail with you, and recommend an immediate application.'

No sooner did old Harrison hear that his son's 'soul was in arms, and eager for the fray,' than he made friends with Susan to endeavour to dissuade him from again going to sea.

'I know him better than that,' said Susan: 'his heart may be mine, but his whole soul is in the service. You have come, my dear father, to the worst advocate in the world, for I would not have him idle on shore whilst the enemies of his country were on the seas for all the gold in the universe. As he has risen unaided to his present rank, now your influence must be exerted in his favour; get him a ship; let him be first on the sea. I will part with him for his country's sake; and I have an equal claim with yourself to his affection, and much more require his presence.'

Although Mr. Harrison was rather startled at his daughter's words, he was obliged altogether to give way when Bowling jumped into the room, waving the doctor's letter, and giving continual cheers, because murder was about

'To bare her arm, and rampant War
Yoke the red dragons of her iron car.'

He began, 'Now, Sir, for your interest—a ship, sir, a ship!—let me but have one chance to redeem what some would say I lost when the *Thames* was wrecked, and I will die an admiral, with as many stars as would light up the heavens.'

'Think what I should suffer,' said his father, 'by your loss. You will not even take my name; and although it is true you sometimes sign yourself Thomas Bowling Harrison, yet the world only knows you as Captain Bowling, and I am denied the participation of my just share of your honours.'

'Bless you, my dear father!' said Bowling, 'you may call me what you like, Jenkins, Wilkins, Tomkins, or even Green, if you will but get me a frigate, and send me to sea. I have been stolen once, lost once, wrecked once, I can but die once; in my absence, my Susan will be my representative: she will console my poor mother, and you will be happy in your son's success. One word from you, so long buried from the world, will ap-

pear like a resurrection to political life. Your elder brother's interest, which, as he is without children, must come to you and to myself, will ensure success ; and once again let me see the long pendant wave over my head, and watch the proud flag of England waving from the peak of my frigate, if I disgrace it you will be happy to hear of a worthless man's death ; if I uphold it with honour, the name of Harrison will be greater, and even your brother's title of Waltham become more attractive.'

'Your mother, my dear boy ! have you no thought for your mother?'

'All that a son should have, I have. I would not wound her affections for the gratification of any idle pleasure ; but this is a laudable, a praiseworthy ambition—it is a duty I owe my country ; and although I owe my parents my first duty, my first honour, yet they could not bear their son to rot in idleness, whilst the giant arm of France will be extended against our island. Tell my mother of it kindly, and write a letter to the First Lord directly. Give me but this chance, and see if I am not worthy of your name.'

Mr. Harrison could no longer resist : he saw above his son's manifestations of duty and affection the bright spark of ambition, and making a virtue of necessity, he penned the solicited letter.

Bowling was now more alive than when, like Nelson, he planted cabbages and took to gardening. An active mind is sadly circumscribed in the country ; and those who have wandered over the world in restless despatch, are not much qualified, whilst the hot blood of youth still courses in their veins, to sit down quietly, or gaze with coolness on the dusty road which leads to the metropolis, or hail with indifference a drove of sheep, or a wandering pedlar. Poor Morris's song, in which he designates the country as 'so calm and composing from morning till night,' would make a sailor cut his throat, or hang himself, in the seclusion of Devonshire.

Mrs. Talbot was married to the rector; and Susan, her husband, and the old Harrisons, left the hospitable mansion of the 'widow married' for the dulness of the cottage in which Mr. Harrison had passed so many years. It looked a horrid sepulchral abode ; and even Susan's sprightly song, or Bowling's yarns, failed to make it cheerful. Mr. Harrison had returned to the world, and was not inclined to be sent to Coventry by it. Even Mrs. Harrison, so resigned under the afflictions she had experienced, thought a little change might be beneficial ; and it was voted, that, to whichever port Bowling should be directed to repair to join his ship, thither they should repair also. Now their only consolation was a drive to Mrs. Talbot's, and there to gossip and to laugh over the rector's news and remarks. But on the third day after the marriage, the bride, instead of the white dress which betokens happiness, was dressed in that dark, dingy, melancholy mourning, which civilization has chosen to represent grief.

'I fear we intrude?' said Mr. Harrison, whilst Susan, kissing her long-tried friend, implored her to impart her sorrows, and allow her to participate in them.

'I grieve,' said the rector's wife, 'for one who certainly never deserved a tear from a woman ; but we cannot forget the innocence of childhood, even in the transgressions of man. Cornish has fallen a victim to the just resentment of a brother. You remember the trial concerning Boniface's daughter, and the ruin that followed the vindictive malice of my son-in-law. The brother of the girl had, from steward of an Indiaman, risen to be a purser of a China ship, and by prudence amassed a considerable fortune. He returned to our village to share his wealth with his father, and to place him in a better situation. He found a desert where he sought a home.

'He was recommended to Clasp for information ; and here he learnt that his father had, in his old age, been endeavouring to stem the tide of misfortune which set against him when his daughter was ruined. The new inn was a failure ; and at that moment Boniface was in gaol for debt, and the sister was earning a scanty maintenance in Exeter by her needle. Clasp soon had the money to release the father, and place the girl in comparative affluence ; but nothing could induce the brother to see either his father or his sister until he had been revenged upon the oppressor.

'It required but an hour to reach the house ; but that was not the course pursued. The next day was market-day ; and, as you know, the different gentlemen round about generally meet at the magistrate's rooms. The purser waited, with more patience than sailors generally possess, until almost all the men of the county hereabouts were in conversation together. He asked several to point out Captain Cornish, lest he should be mistaken in his man. And, being quite assured of him, he walked up ; and, from his gentlemanly appearance, was received amongst them.

'"Captain Cornish, I believe?" he began.

'"The same," said the unsuspecting man.

'"I would place you in a position to save your life—or, at any rate, protect it."

'The whole group turned to eye the stranger ; and with that avidity for any novelty so conspicuous in Englishmen, they listened attentively to the result.

'"The brother of the girl whom you seduced and ruined is about to demand satisfaction of you ; and, as in this case, you could not with honour fire at him whom in his sister you have so injured, I have

ventured to apprize you of the fact, and to warn you that I alone can place you in a position to defend your life."

'"I feel very grateful," replied Cornish, still unsuspicious, "for your kindness; and you would place me under an obligation I should not easily forget."

'"I do not think you will!" said the purser, as he seized him by the collar, and swinging him round, in spite of his strength, he chastised him with a cane until it split to pieces. "There," he exclaimed, as he threw Cornish from him, "now you are on an equality with me. I am the brother of that girl who believed in you, trusted in you, and whom you ruined. The world has given you the reputation of that common animal virtue —courage. Let us see how long it will be before you have courage enough to resent those blows, which will leave a mark on your memory the longest day will never efface. I do not spit upon you—I do not kick you: but it is my regard to the usages of society which prevents this greater disgrace. Doctor," added he, calling a sallow-faced man, "give this *gentleman*, as the lawyers say, any facilities. I shall await you where I told you," and he retired from the astonished group.'

'That's my doctor, for any money!' said Bowling; 'he is getting ready for war, and is always looking out for a circumstance, as he calls a duel, or an execution, or an apoplectic fit, or a capsize from a carriage, or any other event which frustrates the hopes, or breaks the hearts or the necks of men.'

'What an amiable character!' observed Susan.

'But pray proceed.'

'The rest is easily told. The doctor did give every facility. He whispered cautiously, so that none could overhear, where the purser was to be found, and where he should be with him at six o'clock that evening. They met more like devils than men, Cornish swearing that one of the two must be left on the field; to which the purser remarked that the neighbouring ditch was deep enough to conceal the miserable carcase he would soon consign to it. And although the doctor declared that he should expect satisfaction himself if silence was not observed, yet such were the excited feelings of Cornish that he cursed both seconds for their slowness of preparation.

'"Keep yourself cool and quiet," the doctor said to the purser. "You are like a bad sportsman going to fire at the first brush of the birds. Can I do anything more for you besides shooting the second of that long-legged rascal for letting his principal talk, if you hop the twig?"

'"Nothing more than to see my wishes executed, as I have desired in a will left with Clasp."

'"I'll call out either Clasp or Pouch, or both, if you particularly desire it. I consider it my duty to attend to the last wishes of my principal. You cannot miss your man if you could hit a barn-door at twelve paces. Now then!"

'The word was given by Cornish's second, and both fired; and both missed.

'"You'll be popping away there until the 1st of September at that rate," said the doctor. "I wish I had only the settling of the dispute, and I'd bet a pound I would hit him."

'"And so will I," replied the purser.

'"Done!" said the doctor. "It's a bet; this shot mind."

'"Oh, of course," replied the purser. They fired again. The ball from Cornish's pistol took off a part of the rim of the purser's hat; whilst that of the latter struck the shoulder-blade of my son-in-law, and glanced off.

'"That's a pound, good money," said the doctor.

'"I must take my man from the ground," observed Cornish's second; "he is wounded."

'"Quite impossible," replied the doctor; "to lose my money and the sport too. I expect your man, sir, to beg my principal's pardon for the injury he has inflicted upon his family."

'"I would see you and your principal——"

'D—d first, of course,' interrupted Bowling. 'Pray go on, madam; I never recollect a more interesting affair.' Susan looked reproachfully at him: and as he kissed her pretty lips he said, 'The remark, my love, is professional. I'll swear for the rector's wife.'

'The rest is soon related. A quarrel ensued. Cornish was determined to have another shot, and his second was averse to the continuance of the duel. The doctor declared it was mighty unkind to interrupt any man in either his speech or his amusements; more especially as he had a bet of double or quits upon the event.

'They fired again, and Cornish was mortally wounded. He said scarcely a word from the time he was shot. The doctor forgot his former employment in his professional duties, and examined the wound. He saw in an instant it was mortal, and with much more feeling than could be anticipated from his former conduct he communicated the sad intelligence to Cornish; and he called upon him to do an act of justice in his last moments, to forgive the man who had shot him; and to contribute to the alleviation of the girl's misery.

'Even in death, either the vindictive malice which had been his characteristic through life, or his love of money, which never is extinguished until death comes, made him resolute to deny the doctor's request; and as he writhed in torture before he died, the only

words he articulated were directed against Fortune for her desertion of him.'

'And where is the rector?' asked Bowling.

'He has gone to do one of the melancholy obligations of his calling—to break the sorrowful intelligence to the father. And now I hope we may be permitted to use our endeavours to alleviate his distress; but years have passed since we have spoken or visited. The grave of the son should be the sepulchre of our estrangement.'

'Pray, Tom,' said Mr. Harrison, 'is this fighting doctor your particular friend?'

'He is, sir; and one I would rather have near me than any man in the navy. He is the kindest man, the best friend, and the most trustworthy mortal I ever commanded. With all his disposition to quarrel, I never yet knew him do an injustice. If he is wrong, he apologises; if not, he——'

'Shoots you!' interrupted Mr. Harrison.

The grief of the bride was not of long duration; and Harrison, on his return to the cottage, found a strange gentleman waiting the arrival of his son. He was a sallow-faced, thin person, with grey eyes deeply seated, and with a thin and rigid lip. His chin was prominent, and his cheek-bones high; but there was an air of benevolence about him which was rather engaging.

'My dear father,' said Bowling, 'let me introduce you to my friend and companion in arms, the fighting doctor.'

'Lord bless me!' said Harrison, starting back.

'And he won't fight you, be assured. Now, doctor, the news?'

'War will be declared to-morrow. I was at the Admiralty two hours after the arrival of your application; you are to have a ship, and I am once more to be with you. In the meantime, I have had a circumstance; and our old friend Cornish, who sang your songs, is gone where poetry is not admitted since Orpheus left it. Do you know, they say your name is Harrison in London; and as I considered that a personal insult to you, I settled the affair with an Admiralty clerk.'

'I beg, sir,' said Mr. Harrison, 'you will call him Tom Bowling for the future, even in my presence.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

IN WHICH THE LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT IS EXPLAINED, AND GREENWICH HOSPITAL HEAVES IN SIGHT.

ON the 16th of May, 1803, war was declared with France, and all the energies of Great Britain were put forth to prepare her fleets for the coming contest. The Admiralty was besieged by officers, who had not lingered so long on shore as to become enamoured of its idleness and dissipation. The grass was soon trodden down in Portsmouth streets; and from Gosport or Common Hard to the uttermost extremity of South Sea Beach the cry was 'War!' The Jews were on the alert; the dockyard thronged with artificers; the streets displayed a hundred uniforms; and the ladies, who chiefly resided at the back of the Point, came forth bedizened in all the gaudiness of dress. Every man's time seemed precious; no one loitered in the streets or lounged upon the ramparts; a general activity pervaded all sorts and conditions of men; and Portsmouth was then a thriving place for the vigilant and industrious.

On the 18th of May Bowling hoisted his pendant, and read his commission on board of the *Arethusa*. Susan went on board to see the ceremony, and was saved the infliction of being *whipped in* by mounting the side of the hulk to which the *Arethusa* was lashed. The name of Bowling was sufficient to captivate the seamen, who have a strong predilection for names which in any way are familiar to their ears; and before a week had transpired, what between the press-gang and the volunteers, the *Arethusa* began to show a man-of-war-like appearance. So eager were the officers to procure seamen, and so blindly did the press-gangs perform their duties, that one night old Mr. Harrison, a man of sixty, was obliged to show his grey hairs to save him from being hauled, nolens volens, on board the guard-ship. Fortunately Captain Bowling came to his rescue in uniform, or Mr. Harrison might have slept on board the guard-ship. Very few questions were asked.

A gentleman in plain clothes, of about three and twenty years of age, was caught about eleven at night, moving slowly along from Common Hard towards High Street. He was seized directly, and his voice was drowned by those of the gang, who wanted men, and not excuses. The officer who commanded this gang only heard, 'Haul him on board! Freshen his way, the long-tailed varmint! Clap a stopper on his jawing-tackle, and give his red rag a holiday!' and such-like elegant extracts from the nautical literature.

'Hand him off!' said the lieutenant; 'if he is not a seafaring man, we shall find out soon who he is.'

'He's a regular sailor, your honour, for he said he was "hard up on a clinch, and no knife to cut the seizings."'

'Very well, very well!' said the officer. 'Hand him off, and look sharp about it.'

On being taken on board the guard-ship, the young gentleman asked to see the commanding officer.

'You'll see him to-morrow morning soon enough, I'll warrant! Hand him down below, and don't stand chattering here!' And as the impressed man made some show

of resistance, he was forced below. Here he declared that he would have satisfaction ; but finding all his noise useless, he made up his mind, like a wise man, to turn the whole affair into ridicule and advantage, and chuckled at the astonishment he should create.

The next morning all the pressed men were ordered on deck.

'Pray, sir,' said the gentleman to the first lieutenant, 'am I a pressed man?'

'Yes, to be sure you are.'

'And what rank am I to have?'

'Rank!' said the lieutenant, laughing—and when he laughed all the others tittered—'you'll be rated a landsman.'

'Landsman be d—d,' said the other. 'I shan't serve as a landsman.'

'You had better learn to be civil, or I'll teach you the way.'

'You dare not touch me until my name is on your books. I tell you I won't serve as a landsman.'

'Pray what rank would you prefer?' said the first lieutenant, mimicking excessive condescension. 'An A. B., petty or warrant officer, midshipman, lieutenant, or captain? Pray, choose ; the service was made for you, of course.'

'Well, now, that's what I call civil, obliging, and proper ; and makes me think you are not such monsters and bears as you are called. I'll take this rank, if you please.' And he handed out a piece of parchment, and drew himself up, and toed the line, with a face as grave as a judge ; looking for all the world, in spite of his long togs, like a seaman at muster. He plastered his hair down, and looked as submissive as a marine near the gratings.

'I beg you ten thousand pardons, sir,' said the first lieutenant. 'I am extremely sorry for the mistake ; really I do not know what to say.' But although he palavered away for five minutes, the gentleman stood with his hat off ; and until he was called by his name and title--for he was a young commander just appointed to a brig—he never stirred.

'Well,' said he, 'as for myself, I don't care ; but it's just as well to let your captain and admiral know how a gentleman without a commission in his pocket might be insulted ; and I think it will teach a little more prudence in future. Man a boat for me this instant!' The lieutenant blustered about for the gig, when the young commander whispered to the first lieutenant something about giving him the preference for men ; and in a fortnight that brig was at sea, the best-manned vessel out of Portsmouth : and all owing to the captain having been pressed.

The *Arethusa* was at sea. Her combat with the three French frigates is familiar to the ears of all seamen, since it was recorded in one of our most celebrated songs. Here Bowling and the fighting doctor quite outdid themselves. The coolness of the doctor gained him immortal credit ; and when the three frigates were forced on shore and wrecked, and the *Arethusa* was dismasted, and towed off the land by the brig commanded by the young pressed commander, every man in the Channel fleet grew familiar with the name of Bowling, and he was called, in the midshipmen's berth, a star to guide others. His curious history, now generally known (for Bowling was proud of it after his birth and parentage were established), was the theme of many conversations, and was soon spread by the trumpet tongue of fame to Nelson, who was then gardening for health, whilst he was sighing to command the fleet which was blockading Cadiz.

Neither was this the only action in which Bowling was concerned ; he harassed the enemy by his boats, and no vessel was safe, however close to a battery. All the officers of the navy were anxious to serve with him ; he had enterprise, and he had talent ; he never rashly sacrificed his men, and oftentimes commanded his own boats. The *Arethusa* was the ship for promotions, and the *Gazette* never appeared a month without a letter from Captain Bowling, detailing some events.

When Nelson, in 1805, was appointed to the command of the fleet off Cadiz, the First Lord offered him the choice of his captain : 'Choose for yourself, my lord,' said Nelson, 'out of all the navy list ; you cannot make a bad selection.'

'What think you of Captain Bowling?' said the First Lord.

'I think him the most rising man in the navy, and one who will leave a name in the naval history of England not often surpassed.'

'I will appoint him to the *Victory*, being convinced that he will gain fresh laurels under Lord Nelson.'

The little man bowed, and shortly afterwards Bowling resigned the *Arethusa*, amid cheers which long resounded, to serve under England's greatest admiral. On joining the fleet, Bowling hastened to pay his respects to his old commander, Collingwood, then second in command. He was received by that kind and excellent man with warm congratulations : and no one listened with more attention to his life of adventures than did Collingwood.

'You have merited,' he said, 'all the honours which have entwined around you ; and when I think of the good fortune which first brought you under my observation, and which prompted Nelson to recommend your advancement as a spur to others, I little thought I should one day see you the flag captain of Nelson. The *Victory* made my signal a month ago three times for a lieutenant. I went on board myself, and I found

it was for a bag of vegetables. Now you are there we shall be saved such harassing for trifles.'

A very few days afterwards the battle of Trafalgar was fought, a battle which, strange enough to say, by *some*, and those of course *ignorant* Frenchmen, is believed to have been won by France. In that action Nelson fortunately died, for had he lived to have dived into the boiling water and changing currents of politics, he would not, could not, have been respected like his great rival of military fame; for great as was the name of Nelson, and hallowed as it ever will be by the navy of England, he was no rival of Collingwood in diplomacy. More ready in resources, more active in operation, quicker to discern, and more prompt to act, he wanted that coolness which characterized Collingwood.

It is true, in action he was always cool, as was witnessed at Copenhagen, when he *sealed* his letter to the Crown Prince, saying, when the candle was brought, 'It does not look well to be hurried or informal at such a minute.' He died, and Collingwood succeeded to the command; Bowling again was welcomed to Susan, and she saw the medal which had been struck by an Act of Parliament; she saw her husband 'Sir Thomas Bowling,' and smiled with affected vanity as she was called by her subservient maid 'Your ladyship.' Sir Thomas, in 1806, saw the hero of the Nile, of Copenhagen, and of Trafalgar, deposited in St. Paul's; and once again, eager to increase the success he had gained, he, in spite of his father's request, again solicited an appointment.

'My son,' said the present Lord Waltham, for Mr. Harrison had succeeded to the title, 'I cannot bear your absence; you are the prop of my house, you must not, cannot go.'

'Never mind, my lord,' replied Bowling. 'I have left you two little props already to uphold your house. I want to uphold our name. I have chosen the sea for my profession, my country for my approvers. It is true we have not many enemies afloat, but they will rise up again, and I must be amongst them. Speak to him, Susan; tell him your mind.'

'I should almost hate him, my lord,' said the spirited girl, 'if to dangle at my apron-string, in these times of active war, he idled on shore.'

'I will bring him into Parliament,' said Waltham.

'And make a fool of me,' replied Bowling. 'If I spoke I should speak to a disadvantage as to my language; and I could not bear to sit for hours idle, listening to those great orators I could never hope to rival, and having as the reward of my attention to my country's cause, only the gratification of a silent vote, or my name on a frank. We are not fit for Parliament; we are too accustomed to be kings to dwindle down into senators. Collingwood is on the seas: he has daughters to whom he is almost a stranger; and although domestic in his manners, and eager to superintend the education of those to whom he is so attached, he sacrifices all for his country's interest: he toils with unremitted zeal in the cause of England, he forgets his private concerns in the public good, and he will sink into his grave, having shattered his health by his application, leaving a name to posterity to cherish and respect.'

'It's very strange, my son,' observed Lord Waltham, with a smile, 'how men toil, that those who never knew them may hear of them, and those unborn may read their names. How they sacrifice present comfort for future fame; and fame after all is but air!'

'Oh!' said Susan, with rapture, 'that I might hear, if I outlived my husband (which I pray may never be the case), his name in every mouth, his epitaph on every tongue, and see on the pages of history his future fame and glory. Go, Bowling, do not let the words "wife, children, or father," detain you. I will pray for you, and watch over your children—every word you write shall be sacredly obeyed, and every record of your name shall be preserved with these.' As Bowling entwined her in his embrace, and kissed the lips from which he had heard such spirited advice, Susan drew from her bosom a small book, in which every mention of her husband's name had been extracted from the *Gazette*, and carefully preserved near her heart.

'You ought to have been an empress,' said Waltham.

'I scarcely *deserve*,' she replied, 'to be his wife.'

'And can you bear to part with him you so much love; from whose lips the words of reproach never fell—who watches you with affection, and who almost becomes an idolater in his worship of you?'

'I can bear anything for his honour. He has arrived at a certain point; if he remains inactive he will sink to the common level of the many hundreds who have not energy to advance; his foot is in the stirrup, let him vault into the seat.'

'I would not stay on shore,' said Bowling, 'after that for all the seats in Parliament that ever were manufactured out of rotten boroughs. A ship, my lord, you have power now—a ship!'

'I almost wish,' said Waltham, 'that Noah's ark had sunk, and that we had never heard of a navy. Every beggar in the street, who can sing a song, keeps grunting out something about Nelson; every youngster is mad for the most uncomfortable service in the world. And now the ladies,

touched with patriotic ardour, urge their husbands to forsake them, in order to be shot, or, my dear Susan, to become Nelsons and Collingwoods. It's all nonsense, I tell you; the trumpet of fame makes more fools than ever it makes heroes. But I think it is as well to send Bowling to sea to save my servant's legs; for ever since he was made Sir Thomas, I hear of nothing but applications. What's this—another!—I'll get you a ship to-morrow.'

Bowling opened a letter, which was as follows:—

'"Dear Sir Thomas Bowling,—I congratulate you with all my heart—"'

'I'm quite awake to all that flummery,' said Lord Waltham;—it's a petition.'

'"And next to the capture of Martinique, I consider Trafalgar as the greatest action on record. I am getting rather old and crazy withal, my timbers are all loosened, and I doubt if my ribs and knees will hold together much longer. I've lost a considerable number of my head-rails, and I've started my stern-post, so I consider I ought to be laid up in ordinary. There's a vacancy in Greenwich Hospital for a lieutenant, at least, there will be in a week, for old Death has given Mr. Lanyard such a shaking that he'll never be able to move if they cut his shores away. Now, sir, since I served under you, and my wife served under your lady, I consider I have some claims upon you; and I venture to hope that you will not forget your old companion in arms, and think for a moment how gratifying it would be to me to lie up in ordinary in Greenwich Reach, rather than moulder away in Rotten Row. I understand your father is a lord; one word from him, and I might take up my moorings."'

'I told you so, Bowling—I shall go mad—I shall indeed!'

'Don't make any rash promises,' said Bowling laughingly; 'but for this generous fellow, I must intercede.'

'Generous, indeed!' said Susan.

'Very supplicatory; but as for the generosity, Tom, my boy, I can't say much for that, unless, indeed, volunteering to strike me down the afterhold, and calling me a ground tier butt, be taken as a proof of liberality of labour, however little solicited.'

Bowling laughed, and explained what Watson had meant, and likewise the interpretation of his nautical language to the drunken coachman. 'And now,' he said, 'it is my turn. I am indebted to that man twice for my life. In mounting the wall at Martinique, he parried a blow which would have split a thicker skull than mine. And when my poor little frigate, the *Thames*, was wrecked, that gallant fellow faced the boiling surf, which foamed and hissed like one universal cauldron—I tell you, assisted only by a weak line, he braved every danger. He left his wife and child to succour me; he dashed into the water, got on board the *Thames* in spite of all the opposition of the elements, and by him I was dragged on shore. Susan, my love, give my father a kiss; and after what I have said, speak what comes uppermost in your mind. The constant are always generous; it is merely the weak and the trivial who foster revenge for trifles—speak, girl.'

'My lord, you have often asked me to solicit a favour that you might show your affection for me. Your unbounded kindness has stopped my tongue until now; grant me what my husband would himself ask for the man who ventured his life to save that which is far dearer to me than my own.'

'Go, go, you coaxing little jade; order my carriage, Tom—what's his name, Watkins?'

'No, Watson.'

'Well, Watson, consider it done—I won't dine until I have a promise.'

CHAPTER LIX.

IN WHICH THERE IS A MAGNIFICENT EXPLOSION; HALF A DOZEN BATTLES; TWO VERY INTERESTING DEATHS; AN EPITAPH; AND AN END.

'FAME'S trumpet,' says Lord Collingwood, in one of his letters to Mr. Moutray, 'makes a great noise, but the notes do not dwell long on the ear;' and Bowling found that, although he had occupied a note of the trumpet, yet that his fame would soon dwindle into thin air by inactivity. He was, however, soon relieved from gardening, and did not agree at all in the expression of his former commander, 'For my own part, I can say that I never have been perfectly happy since I left planting my cabbages and excellent potatoes.' Bowling, although faithful and fond of his Susan, was out of his element on shore. With a light heart and a cheerful countenance, he took his passage in the *Melpomene*, then commanded by the young and heroic Peter Parker, and joined the *Ocean* off Cadiz, on board of which ship Admiral Lord Collingwood had hoisted his flag. Here Bowling received instruction from every word of his commander; and here he learnt to abhor the abuse of that power, wisely invested, to inflict corporal punishment; he treasured up in his memory the words of that great man, when a captain, who was rigidly religious and fantastically enthusiastic, presented a long list of punishments: 'I do not understand, Bowling,' said he, 'what kind of religion it is that finds a man praying all night, and flogging his men all day.'

The *Ocean* ill accorded with Bowling's active disposition. Lord Collingwood, indeed, was active; for he corresponded with every one, from the Dey of Algiers to his gardener, and his whole day and half his

night was devoted to this laborious exertion of the mind. He seldom came on deck; and his ship resembled the Foreign Office afloat.

'Dull work for you, Bowling!' he said one day. 'But never mind; you shall yet have a chance. I have got a little service for Duckworth, and I intend to send you with him. When you come back, you will be able to tell us how Turks at Constantinople wear their turbans. Here is an order for you to join the *Royal George;* but mind, I shall have you at my right hand when I die. I shall not hold out long; and I would, if the country were kind enough to supersede me, rather die in the bosom of my family than in the command of a fleet. How long do you require to get ready?'

Bowling looked with some astonishment at the question: 'How long, my lord? I am ready now.'

'You are worthy of the rank you have attained. To-morrow I shall part with you.'

'I hope, my lord, by your thus sending me away, you do not anticipate any movement of the enemy near you?'

'In all the enemy's ports,' Lord Collingwood replied, 'they are ready for a push-out. They have tried at Rochefort and Brest to put to sea; but our squadron off the latter port could not be eluded, and they returned. At Cadiz the people are ready, and have the appearance of waiting for some reinforcement. Perhaps the northern squadron may come here in sufficient force to drive us off, and, joining the fleet at Cadiz, push up the Mediterranean, increasing their numbers as they go. But I think you will have time enough to rejoin me before they come this far.'

A few weeks found Bowling on board the *Royal George*, the flag-ship of Sir Thomas Duckworth; and not far from her, lying nearer the Island of Tenedos, was the *Ajax*. The news of Bowling's arrival was known as soon as the event, and one of the first persons who came to see him was the fighting doctor, who was surgeon of the latter-named ship, and who was appointed on the application of Lord Waltham, who thought the gunpowder surgeon would blow up the whole parish, and kindly sent him afloat in the hopes of the enemy doing as much for him.

'There is another of your shipmates on board the *Ajax*, Sir Thomas,' said the doctor, 'and one who volunteered to fight your battles for you—Mr. Patrick O'Leary.'

'Is he as wild as ever?'

'He is crazy now to join you, and swears his usual oath, about the seven great geese that eat the grass off Solomon's grave, that he would sooner serve under you than command the fleet himself.'

Sir Thomas Duckworth having sent for Sir Thomas Bowling, the friends parted before the doctor could condole over the unfortunate truth that he had never had a circumstance of late worth recording; and little he thought, as he shook Bowling's hand, of the accident about to occur. It was the next day that the *Ajax* was discovered to be on fire. Every remedy which the most active discipline could apply was quickly called into use; but few know how the cry of fire on board a ship operates to overthrow all discipline. It seemed but a moment when the smoke was perceived below before the sparks burst up the hatchways; the rigging soon caught fire, and the flames ascended the tarred ropes with the velocity of rockets; the whole making one grand and terrific firework, appalling to the spectators and desponding to the crew. But neither the melted pitch which fell like rain on the deck, the suffocating smoke which choked the adventurous below, nor the scorching heat of the crackling decks, could stop the doctor in his endeavours to extinguish the devouring element. By his side O'Leary seemed a fire-worshipper; and he scouted with indignant scorn the many who, appalled at the rapidity of the flame, jumped overboard, and sought to save themselves by swimming. The doctor flourished the pipe of the fire-engine; O'Leary pumped and cursed; but it was evident the exertions made by these two might prolong the work of devastation, but never could extinguish the cause. The whole of the ship was on fire below; and aloft the dangling ropes, the smoking canvas, and the scorched masts, were witnesses of the terrific power which had partially consumed them. The guns were all loaded and shotted, and the heat was sure to explode them. This deterred some of the boats from approaching as near as they might have done; whilst the knowledge that the fire was below, and consequently in the vicinity of the magazines, kept the more cautious aloof from an explosion which threatened death and destruction to all. The cries of some, wounded by the fall of the spars aloft, were unheeded in the general dismay. Not even the doctor would attend to the moans and groans around him; his object, his hope, was to succeed when all had given it up as useless.

In this moment of horror, when human life was sacrificed to discipline, none was nearer the ship than Bowling: he attempted to get on board, but the fire seemed vomited from the port holes; and the guns, which every now and then went off, rendered his rashness culpable. He saw the doctor unhurt as yet, amidst the flames, working with all his usual zeal; but it was evident that no human determination could much longer face the raging element, and the doctor called O'Leary from the useless attempt, and desired him to leap overboard and save himself.

'Lape overboard and be drowned, by the piper, you mane! I'm a magnificent diver, but bad luck to the stroke I ever swam.'

'Get over the bowsprit-end; some boat

will pick you up. I was the last man on board the *Thames*; and I fancy I shall have no opposition to my determination to be the last now.'

'Excepting always myself, your honour, for if it's worse to be roasted or drowned alive I can't exactly say; but I think I shall try a touch of both.'

On the forecastle of the *Ajax* stood the sentinel, who had been planted there to remain until he was relieved; no power could make him quit his post; and although at this time, the beams being burnt below, the weight of the guns began to force in the decks, and the flames came up fresher as the destruction fed them with fuel, and the heat was such that the barrel of his musket defied the touch, there stood the sentinel, awaiting his death with inconceivable unconcern.

'I relieve you,' said the doctor: 'save yourself before she blows up.'

'The sergeant must do that.'

'O'Leary,' said the doctor, 'that man is worth a million of marines,' as he whispered something in O'Leary's ear.

'In the twinkling of a bed-post, your honour;' and O'Leary leaped upon the gallant fellow, and, assisted by the doctor, they threw him overboard.

'I'll bet a glass of whisky, anyhow, he'll strike out now like a Briton.'

'Here's a boat close-to, O'Leary; now for yourself; I'll hold you up; jump.'

'I'd always a precious aversion to bathing ever since we lost the man from the shark in the *Echo;* but mayhap, your honour, the fishes don't like their mate parboiled; here goes to put the fire on my back out;' and halloing to the last boat, which still lingered to save whilst hope remained, and in that boat was Bowling, O'Leary ran out upon the bowsprit-end, with an intention of dropping overboard; the doctor was on the forecastle-bulwark, and was seen looking behind him at the fire, which seemed prolonging its flame to reach its victim, when one appalling explosion took place, which the continued bursting of the guns seemed to have heralded as they boomed over the grave of the *Ajax*.

Masts, yards, and spars, the guns, shot, the living and the dead, were blown into the air in horrible confusion; an awful silence followed the tremendous thunder of that burst: the breeze, which before blew to fan the flames, suddenly subsided into a calm, and the dense black smoke hovered over the spot as a pall over the ruin; then came the splash, the sullen splash of a heavy mast, disturbing the awful silence around, while lighted pieces of wood fell on board the nearer ships, threatening them with the same destruction. The *Ajax* had disappeared; not a fragment of that beautiful ship remained united to another fragment; they were all torn asunder by the tremendous force of that explosion, and when the cloud of smoke was removed by the renewed breeze, the sea was calm and smooth as a mirror, betraying not the slightest record of the grave which had received the hull of the *Ajax*.

The boats were now active in the extreme; there was no further danger to be apprehended, and they used their utmost endeavours to save some of the men who were still swimming. O'Leary was never found; but the doctor, although nearer the danger, was picked up some distance from the ship, and alive; he was taken to the flag-ship, and ultimately recovered; but it considerably damped his ardour, and hindered him from witnessing the gallant passage of Duckworth's ships through the Hellespont. It was in this affair that Bowling lost his arm from a splinter-wound.

One of those marble-shot, weighing 800 lb., struck the *Royal George*, and Bowling was wounded; he was taken below, and the first man by his side, although strictly desired not to leave his cot, was the doctor. The arm was frightfully injured, and the bone broken; his best friend recommended amputation as the only method to avoid tetanus, and the operation took place before the firing had ceased. They had not, in those times, any rail-road operators, whose consummate skill surmounts all obstacles, and relieves the sufferer from the knife in less than a minute; science had not then made those immense strides, and the patient had to linger out a quarter of an hour in all the agony of dissection; but Bowling never winced; and when the fighting doctor cheered him up, he said, 'Do you think, doctor, Susan will like a mutilated man to attend upon for life?'

'Never mind her, Sir Thomas,' said his friend; 'many a woman has rejoiced in the honourable wounds of her husband. If you had lost your arm from the falling of one of the spars of the *Ajax*, it would not have been so comfortable; but now, in action—a pension in reserve—the appearance of a real warrior partially dismantled, it's a subject of congratulation, and I should have no objection to such a wound myself if it would not hinder me from being useful to my friends.'

'God bless you, doctor, if I should die.'

'Die!' interrupted the doctor; 'why, what is to kill you?'

'Remember my last words were for Susan.'

'I think I'll get married myself, and fight my wife by way of a change. Fancy a man losing his arm, and talking of his Susan; if love can beat an amputating knife, it must be very sharp indeed.'

Bowling soon recovered. He saw the Castles of Abydos and Sestos as the fleet returned; and he left his benediction in very coarse language upon the large gun on the Asiatic side, which had rendered him lopsided for life.

On his return to England he almost

blessed the shot, for Susan's affections were warmer, her care greater, her solicitude unrivalled. The little Bowlings grew up, a strong resemblance to their father. The King gave permission for Sir Thomas to retain the name of Bowling; and a tower was added to the arms of the Walthams, in compensation for the limb of which the tower had deprived him.

Once more, in 1811, was Sir Thomas Bowling in command of a seventy-four; and his good fortune, which still attended him, placed him in a dead calm close alongside of a French eighty-gun ship. It was just such another action as that between the *Victorious* and *Rivoli*. It was the same triumph of animal courage, for there was no manœuvring; the action commenced during the existence of a very consumptive breeze, which soon died of its own exhaustion. The two ships attracted each other, and they soon closed. There they lay, the grape shot going through and through them, the sides almost touching. And when at last the flag of old England waved triumphant over the tricolour of France, each ship presented such a picture of carnage as is rarely seen in naval combats. Here, however, the angel which presided over the care of Bowling seemed to have been scared away by the unusually long roar of the guns; and Bowling was deprived of a leg. He was now unfit for the service in his own estimation, but not in the opinion of the doctor.

The purser of the French ship, who was a very small, deformed man, in making the best of the capture, congratulated his country on the extinction of one great officer in regard to his serving again. The doctor was furious; the purser continued to maintain his opinion, and high words arose; the doctor bridling his disposition to rudeness, in consideration of his adversary being a prisoner.

The purser talked much of a pair of foils which had buttons on; the doctor recommended the armourer to be consulted; the buttons were removed, and the points sharpened. A pretended fencing match took place in the ward-room; and the little purser had a small hole drilled into him just below the breast-bone, which the doctor, having made, began to patch up.

It was his last duel; he began to cool down into a regular kind of man, and was afterwards killed in America, having volunteered his services in a boat expedition. From the time of his entrance into the service until the day he was shot, he never allowed any service to be undertaken without volunteering to be in it. He was an excellent man—one who protected the weak against the tyranny of the strong; and no man regretted him more than Bowling.

The peace of 1815 laid Sir Thomas Bowling up in ordinary. He was quick enough to perceive that the world was tired of war, and that each nation had involved itself so overwhelmingly in debts and difficulties, that universal peace would be long maintained. And when the man, who had spread the fire of desolation throughout the world, was finally condemned to his solitary rock, as one all nations feared, and respected even in his island captivity, Bowling hung up his sword in his dressing-room, by the side of the first wooden leg, which his carpenter had manufactured from a part of the mast of his last prize.

He was too wise to destine his sons for a profession which exists only in war; he procured them honourable employment elsewhere. And when he was promoted to the rank of admiral, he saw at once the greatest object of his ambition, that of commanding a fleet, for ever at an end.

Harmony and peace had permanently established themselves. He, however, had shown in his life that activity, perseverance, and vigilance, must ever succeed; that to every man the same hope which animated him might overstep all obstacles; and that the impressed boy might live to hoist the admiral's flag.

The Sailor King placed him in Greenwich Hospital as its commander; the country applauded *that* appointment; for who was more deserving of it than Bowling? He was welcomed there by hundreds who had fought under him. Old Watson related again and again the glorious attack on Martinique; and his wife suggested that now, as they were all on an equality, she would ask Susan to tea.

As Governor of Greenwich Hospital, Bowling died; the highest admirals held his pall. And on the base of the broken flag-staff which covers his tomb is his epitaph in the words of Dibdin:—

'Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling,
The darling of our crew,
No more he'll hear the tempest howling,
For death has broached him to.
Tom's form was of the manliest beauty,
His heart was kind and soft,
Faithful below he did his duty,
But now he's gone aloft.

'Yet shall poor Tom find pleasant weather
When He, who all commands,
Shall give, to call life's crew together,
The word to pipe all hands.
Thus Death, who tars and kings despatches,
In vain Tom's life has doffed,
For though his body's under hatches,
His soul is gone aloft.'

THE END.

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